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#342
#343
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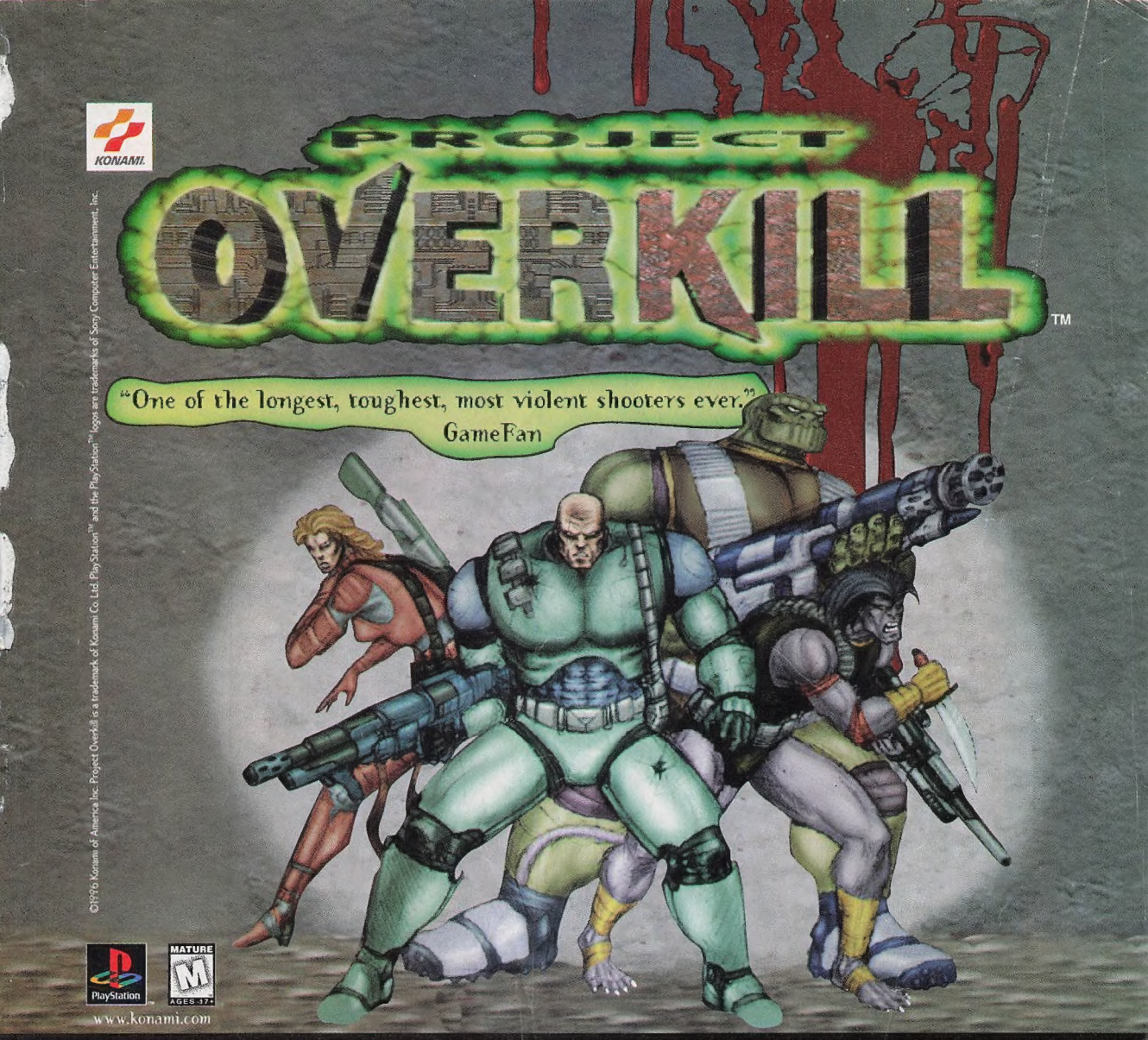

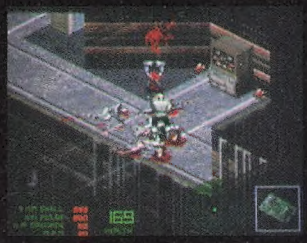

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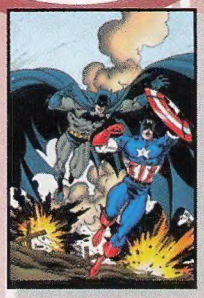

ON THE COVER
Cap/Batman was illustrated by Tom Grummett and colored by Twilight Graphics. To see if Batman stands a chance against Cap, check out Page 62.

Gen[13] was illustrated by J. Scott Campbell and Alex Garner, and colored by Aegis Entertainment. Turn to Page 40 for the latest on the teen team.

standards

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"HEY, DOES *THIS* LOOK SWOLLEN TO YOU?"

FUTURE SHOCK

This is the time of year when people make resolutions and predictions. *Wizard*'s resolutions are quite easy to remember, and lots of fun to execute. We've got a number of different specials planned this year. So far, we've got a Sci-Fi issue coming out in February called *Invasion: The Guide to Science Fiction Entertainment*. In March, we'll publish a special exclusively on the Justice League of America. Both specials will have a great *Wizard* spin, so make sure you check 'em out. *Wizard* magazine also has lots of neat stuff planned on a monthly basis—I know you'll be here to see it.

1997 will be a very interesting year. The big events include a new Batman film, a Spawn film and the Star Wars re-releases. This is a great year for entertainment and an especially big year for toys.

As for comic books, here are my predictions for 1997:
1) There will continue to be lots of crossovers. Publishers seem to like 'em.
2) Major events will shock the industry. Obviously, I can't tell you now, but there will be some big events on the scale of the Superman wedding, *Spawn* #50 and "Heroes Reborn" that will drive sales.
3) The quality of books will continue to rise. In 1996, many books got on track and 1997 will see a continuation of that trend.
4) I hate to make this prediction, but lateness of books will still be a problem. However, books that ship late were severely affected in 1996.
5) We're going to see lots more small, independent titles in the market. There are some real gems out there.
6) The big publishers will seek to shed their lines of non-performing books. It's sometimes better *not* to publish, than to publish something bad.
7) More toys—I know I said it before and I'll say it again...

In this month's issue of *Wizard*, you can win a bookshelf filled with books. It will take years for the lucky winner to finish them all—oh, man, wait till you see what you need to do to enter. We've got a very popular *Mars Attacks* #1/2, a die-cut Chromium Iron Man card and a free X-Man poster. Check out our feature on the Top 10 brawls of all time. Cap vs. Batman. Wolverine vs. Lobo. Who'd *really* win? We also conduct a Q&A with Peter David, give a complete rundown on Star Wars continuity and provide an exclusive look at a Gen[13] image that was too controversial to make into the comic.

See ya,

Gareb S. Shamus

P.S. See ya next month—we've got a *Star Wars* #1/2 issue. Wow!

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Research Assistants William A. Christensen and Mark Seifert
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Design Manager Steve Blackwell
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Contributing Designers Ryan Dunlavey, Suddenly Chadwick! Design, Voltage Design Co.
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Contributors Brian Douglas Ahern, Dan Albaugh, Rob Allstetter, Sorrell Booke, David Borak, Matthew Brady, Steve Brown, Jim Calafiore, Paul Chadwick, Mikey "The Knife" Fasolo, Carl Horn, Craig Kostelecky, John B. Lacey, Andy Lee, Tom Palmer Jr., Tom Russo, Michael Searle, Marc Shapiro, Craig Shutt, Joyce Steel

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Tom Grummett, colored by Twilight Graphics
Gen[13] Cover Art
J. Scott Campbell and Alex Garner, colored by Aegis Entertainment

Wizard Press
President/Publisher Gareb S. Shamus
Executive VP Fred Pierce
VP Finance Edward L. DuPré
Executive Assistant Martha Scheidegger
Production Director Helene Dubrowsky
Promotions & Publicity Manager Jim McLauchlin
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Phone: (914) 268-3907 **Fax:** (914) 268-5386
For Classified and Show Calendar Advertising, contact Karen Evora.

Stuff you don't ever read...

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MAGIC WORDS

The Return of Tattoo-Boy!

Quite a schizophrenic bag of mail this month, with a lot of readers sending in "Heroes Reborn" commentary (the reviews are rather mixed), others inquiring as to the whereabouts of the "Sailor Moon" cartoon (everyone wants it back—badly) and a smattering of letters (all nasty) responding to my now-infamous reply to the tattoo letter in #61's "Magic Words."

I think (I hope) we've finally come full circle on that last item. The man who started the letter page tattoo hoo-hah is back. Ladies and gentlemen, I present the original man I heckled: Chris Blair, Tattoo-Boy.

Dear Wizard,

Back in issue #61, I wrote you for info on the artist who drew a Spider-Man picture that I used as the model for my tattoo. Like usual, all you did was run your mouth and give a lame, uneducated opinion. So here are some replies to your one-sided statements: First, tattoos hurt, but not nearly as bad as everyone seems to think. Second, the risk of contracting hepatitis from getting a tattoo is almost zero. Tattoo artists take the same precautions sterilizing their equipment that doctors do. So before you start breeding paranoia about tattoos, maybe you should get your information straight.

I would like a response to my letter, and I would also like my address published so that anyone out there who would like to write me can.

Chris Blair
620 E. 7th
Seymour, IN 47274

The tattoo crowd got their equal time last issue and Chris' address is here in this issue for all to see. As to a response to your original letter, Chris, check out our next missive:

Dear Wizard,

In response to Chris Blair's (snicker) tattoo question in *Wizard* #61, the artist he's looking for from the 1994 Flair card is Rurik Tyler. The Spidey shot was taken from *Web of Spider-Man* #109, page two.

Dale Riggins
Los Angeles, CA

Thanks for the assist. And the Golden Sterilized Needle Award goes out to Dale in L.A. Are we done with this now?

Dear Jim,

I really enjoy reading *Wizard* every month. It's a great magazine. I do have a gripe, however: Why don't you ever do any features on "funny" comics?

I know super-types sell your mag, but you do have readers that read other things, like Archie Comics or Hanna-Barbera books. I should know. I'm a 20-year-old woman, and I read these comics. People don't think we exist, but we are out there!

Leila Okles
Brockton, MA

We do many of the features we do because of letters we receive and, truth be told, we really haven't seen any letters telling us to do features on "funny" stuff. Anyone else want to see some? Or would you rather we stick to superhero fare? Write and let us know.

Dear Wizard,

Does your last name have to be "Lee" to make it in comics? I mean, there are so many Lees! There's Stan Lee, Jim Lee, Paul Lee, Jae Lee, Scott Lee and Elaine Lee.

I was wondering: If I change my last name to "Lee," will I have a better chance to get into drawing or writing comics? How about my first name? And if I change 'em both, will I become even more famous than all the other Lees? "Lee Lee" does kind of have a ring to it.

Byron "Lee" Manuel
Ville Platte, LA

Well, I asked Jim Lee of WildStorm Productions fame, and he thinks you shouldn't bother with the name change. Why? He says that "all the other Lees are just clones of me and they all die in issue #75, anyway.

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There's no future in it." But he does add that having "Lee" as a last name makes it easier and quicker to sign autographs at a convention. Elaine Lee, writer of Brain-Banx *and two* Vamps *mini-series for DC Comics, wouldn't recommend a switch, either. "All I get is people who think I'm related to Stan Lee. They all think I must be his daughter or something."*

Stick with "Byron Paul." It ain't that bad. I mean, it's not like you have a geeky-sounding name like "Gareb Shamus" or something.

Dear Mr. McLauchlin,

I was so pleased to see the words "Sailor Moon" appear in issue #61's "Magic Words." I too have been on a hunt for *Sailor Moon* comics. But I have a question about the TV show.

I used to wake up at 5:30 a.m. (well before school) to catch "Sailor Moon." But soon, all I saw were reruns. Then I heard they were canceling the show! I heard a rumor that no new episodes were being dubbed for the U.S. or Canada because two of the four new scouts (Sailor Neptune and Sailor Uranus) appeared to be lesbians. Now I've watched the Japanese versions, and yes, they seem to be homosexual. But who cares? There are many people who prefer same-sex relationships. Is this rumor true?

Maribelle Casten
Yuba City, CA

Rarely, if ever, have I seen a group of* Wizard *readers as upset about something as they are about the cancellation of "Sailor Moon." According to "Sailor Moon" distributor DIC Entertainment, the show has been renewed in Canada, but has been tanked in the U.S. A press release from DIC cites "disappointing ratings" as the reason behind the U.S. cancellation. Some people believe that DIC doesn't have the power that, say, Warner Brothers has to get the show in a prime slot, which leads to these "disappointing ratings." Others believe that occasional "objectionable" material is a contributing factor. DIC says that it is trying to find new ways to get the show back on U.S. TV.

THE BUNNY AWARD

be afraid

Jim takes one of his favorite letters of the month and spotlights it here. There's no logic attached to this, nor is there a prize.

Hey Guys,

Where does cheese come from? My friend and I were having an argument about this and I told him that cheese was a silicate, sort of like plastic, except that it's edible. He said that cheese comes from mines, like potatoes do. As you can see, he's not too smart. So please put it down in writing and let him know that he's wrong.

Peter Reinke
Berkeley, CA
ARgos42@aol.com

For a question of this magnitude, we had to go right to the experts. You wanna know about comics? You go to* Wizard. *Wizard wants to know about cheese? We go to Wisconsin.

At the Union Star Cheese Factory in Zittau, Wis., we talked to the incredibly friendly and helpful Jan Metzig, who told us, "They're both wrong. Cheese comes from milk. We add bacteria culture and a rennet, which is an enzyme that speeds up the process of aging and helps the cheese congeal. After that, you can add salt and color if you wish."

There. It's down in writing. And by the way, potatoes don't come from mines, either. Everyone knows the Potato Bunny brings us potatoes.

Dear Jim,

I tried two of the "Heroes Reborn" comics and was surprised to find I liked them. I started with *Fantastic Four* #1 and thought it was okay. Then I read *Iron Man* #1 and the way the books tied together was so good, it changed my opinion of *FF* to "very good!" Lest you think I'm an Image junkie, let me tell you that the first comic I ever bought with my own money was *Fantastic Four* #70, back when it was brand-new.

I have some questions for you about this whole "Reborn" project:

1) Is this essentially an "Elseworlds" concept, or is this a permanent change?

2) Will Marvel ever reunite its universes?

3) How long before these books get turned over to other artists?

Joe McSpadden
Nokesville, VA
TRENTREN@aol.com

I have some answers for you about this whole "Reborn" project:

1 and 2) Well, it's a change, but we don't know how permanent. All three parties involved (Lee and crew, Liefeld and crew and Marvel) have the option to terminate their contracts after six months if they choose to do so. If the contracts are terminated and the "Reborn" characters are folded back into the "regular" Marvel Universe, it may be explained away as an "Elseworlds" story.

3) For one title, pretty damned soon. The lovely and talented Ryan Benjamin, whose talents are spotlighted on this issue's Iron Man card, will be penciling* Iron Man *#4 and #5. Regular penciler Whilce Portacio is scheduled to jump back on with* Iron Man *#6.

Hi,

Why won't Marvel bring back Guido, the Strong Guy from X-Factor? Strong Guy is the best character in X-Factor!

Doug Conner
Moundsville, WV

They very well may. Bob Harras, Marvel Editor-in-Chief and a strong guy in his own right, hints that "There may be a surprise in store soon for all Strong Guy fans."

Photo by Paul Schiraldi

Dear Wizard,

On page 58 of *Wizard* #62 I saw a familiar scene—a group of comrades walking across a street, similar to The Beatles' *Abbey Road* album cover. The title of the article, "With a Little Help from My Friends," is, perhaps coincidentally, the title of a popular Beatles song.

This alone may not mean anything. But writer Tom Peyer (third from the left) is both barefoot and out of step from the rest of Team Valiant. On the *Abbey Road* album cover, Paul McCartney was both out of step with the Beatles and barefoot. In England, many corpses are buried barefoot. This led many people to believe that Paul McCartney had died, and The Beatles were giving the world subtle clues to this fact on *Abbey Road*.

But wait! There's more! On page 59, a bold subhead in the third column says "No Religion, Too," the same lyric used in John Lennon's solo song "Imagine." Plus, back on page 58, the man in the front of Mr. Peyer is dressed in black and named "Priest." So it's a funeral procession! Peyer is the corpse, Christopher Priest is the priest, Kurt Busiek is the gravedigger and Len Kaminski (behind Peyer, and also wearing black) is the "Paul" bearer. Add it all up and what do you get? Tom Peyer is dead!

Bobby Miller
Newfield, NJ

Hmmm. A plausible theory. Being the crack investigative journalist that I am, I realized there may be a story here. Questions must be asked. So I called Tom Peyer, got him (or at least someone claiming to be him) on the phone and asked those questions. My first question: Are you dead? His response: "No comment." I figured I'd try another line of questioning: Are you Paul McCartney? "No comment." Are you alive? He said, "You almost got me there, but no comment." Are you Memorex?

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P E N P A L S

Jason Randall Porter
Age: 9 Sex: Male
60 Parkshore Circle
Sacramento, CA 95831
Silhouet@ix.netcom.com
Likes: *Black Ops, Black & White, Gen13*

Rachel Fielding
Age: 15 Sex: Female
19838 Shalimat Ct.
Bend, OR 97702
Likes: *X-Men, The Crow, Ranma 1/2*

David Bente
Age: 16 Sex: Male
4747 Flora St.
Montclair, CA 91763
Likes: X-titles, mango, anime

Kevin Wong
Age: 18 Sex: Male
109 Cardinal Way
Hercules, CA 94547
Likes: McFarlane books, *Spider-Man, Batman*

Johann Snickelfritz
Age: 17 Sex: Male
P.O. Box 2859
Lompoc, CA 93438
Likes: *Spawn, Johnny the Homicidal Maniac, Verotika*

Dale Thomas
Age: 19 Sex: Male
Licorish Village
My Lord's Hill, St. Michael, Barbados
Likes: X-titles, *Gen13, Lady Death*

Celesta Johnston
Age: 23 Sex: Female
1459 Summit Circle
Bullhead City, AZ 86442-6768
Likes: *Uncanny X-Men, WildC.A.T.s, Cyberforce*

Again, "No comment."

Makes a body wonder. Personally, I think Peyer is alive and this whole thing is a hoax to drum up publicity. But you never know. Stranger things have happened in this business. Given the writing quality of an average issue of the old Valiant stuff, I'd say they're used to employing some dead writers.

All I know is that in the comics, you have to go all the way to **Kingdom Come #1** *to find a license plate numbered "28IF."*

Dear Wizard,

Whatever happened to *The Footsoldiers* by Jim Krueger? That series was butt-kickin'! In the fourth Dark Horse issue, Mr. Krueger said he was going to start a new *Footsoldiers* title with a new company, Compass Comics. He said the new series was supposed to be out in July. Well, there's still no new *Footsoldiers* series and hot dammit, I'm getting mighty impatient!

Kimsang Lor
Tacoma, WA

Can't say I blame you. The only new "Footsoldiers" story appeared in **Asylum #9**. *Look for a new* **Footsoldiers** *series in May, published by Maximum Press.*

Dear Jim,

Whatever happened to Dave Gibbons and Frank Miller's "Martha Washington" series? Please give Martha fans an update!

Drew Sullivan
Phoenix, AZ
Tak Mosh 3@aol.com

Martha Washington returns to active duty in **Martha Washington Saves the World**, *a five-part mini-series coming in mid-1997 from Dark Horse Comics.*

Dear Wizard,

Why doesn't anyone write anything about collateral damage in Marvel Comics? For example, when Cyclops fires an optic blast and misses, the blast doesn't stop until it hits something. What do these loose optic blasts do when they hit? Do they ever kill people?

Sean Shaw
Ocean Springs, MS

Oh, but there is collateral damage. For a humorous look at it, try **Damage Control**, *three separate four-issue mini-series that Marvel published in the early '90s. For a serious look at what happens when someone has to pick up the pieces, try the grossly underrated* **Blockbuster**, *a 1995 Marvel one-shot starring the Silver Surfer. You'll find that loose blasts do indeed kill people.*

Dear Wizard,

Is there any chance of my taking Jim McLauchlin's job and kicking him out into the gutter?

Ben Bebber
Ft. Wainwright, AL

Maybe. First you'd have to beat me best two out of three falls after we strip to the waist and wrestle in cinders. Then you'd have to beat me in ping-pong. Then you'd have to beat my Greater Congers Metroplex keg stand record of one minute, 40 seconds. Then we'll talk.

Personally, I don't think you stand a chance.

Dear Jim,

What you did at the party last night was inexcusable. You are hereby banished from our house.

Opossum123@aol.com
Gabe Freeman
Shady Side, MD

P.S. I want my lawnmower back.

Sorry. My mistake. And please believe me when I tell you that my intentions weren't evil. I mean, I didn't know that Everclear was that flammable, I had no idea you had another purpose in mind for that cat...and no one told me that it was considered polite to take my wristwatch off first. It won't happen again.

P.S. You'll get your lawnmower back when I'm damn good and ready.

Dear Wizard,

You should have the "Life-Sized Cardboard Cut-Out Price Guide."

Mark Wheeler
Nashville, TN
DUDLEYDOG1@aol.com

Yeah, sure. We'll get right on that.

Hey Jim,

I've got this shirt that's dark gray. On a hot day where I sweat a lot, my shirt looks like Rorschach from *Watchmen* in bad lighting. Now tell me I'm not cool.

Rick Morris
Buena Vista, CO

You're not cool.

Dear Wizard,

Did you guys ever wonder what life would be like if superheroes really existed? For example, what would the socio-religious implications be if Thor, Hercules or some other god/superhero were to suddenly appear? Would the real general public be more or less tolerant of mutants than the public in the Marvel Universe?

Would magic become just another scholastic skill, with Dr. Strange or Zatanna for professors? Would extraterrestrial ambassadors get global diplomatic immunity? Would secret identities work? I mean, how long would it really be before people discovered that Superman was just Clark Kent without the glasses?

Timothy Shanahan
Fountain Valley, CA

Interesting questions. I think if a Thor or a Hercules were to appear on the scene, it

PENPALS

Michael D. Hansen ("Sparky")
Age: 25 Sex: Male
462 N. St. Rd. 149
Valparaiso, IN 46383-8804
Likes: *Hellboy, Ghost, The Flash*

Samuel Ruff
Age: 12 Sex: Male
4257 Arcadia Road
Altadena, CA 91001-3767
Likes: *Gen13, The X-Files, Avengelyne*

Phillip Hawkins
Age: 14 Sex: Male
375 Agin Rd.
Harrisburg, IL 62446
Likes: X-titles, Spider-titles, *Generation X*

Christopher Van Helsing
Age: 14 Sex: Male
ChrisVB2@aol.com
Likes: All Marvel, *Batman: The Long Halloween*, and *Ash*

Isaiah Kimball (Likes: Spider-titles, X-titles, *Spawn*) **and Delpha Coffman** (Likes: *Spider-Man, Superman, Spawn*)
both: Age:13 Sex: Male
and both: Shadel@juno.com

Manduda@aol.com
Age: 22 Sex: Female
Likes: *Dawn, Cerebus, Strangers in Paradise*

Mark Arnold
Age: 17 Sex: Male
Thokindred@aol.com
Likes: *Creed, Spawn, Backlash*

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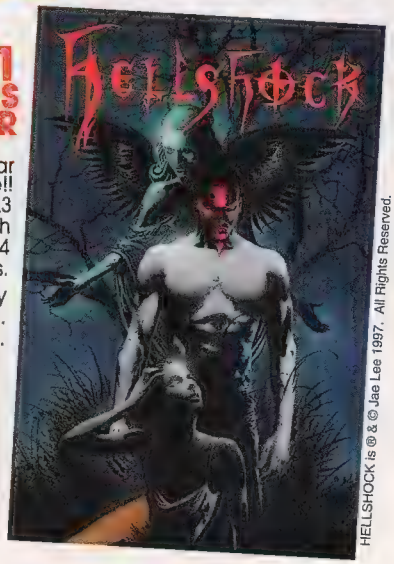

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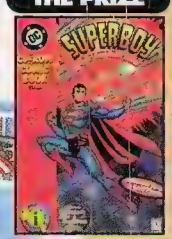

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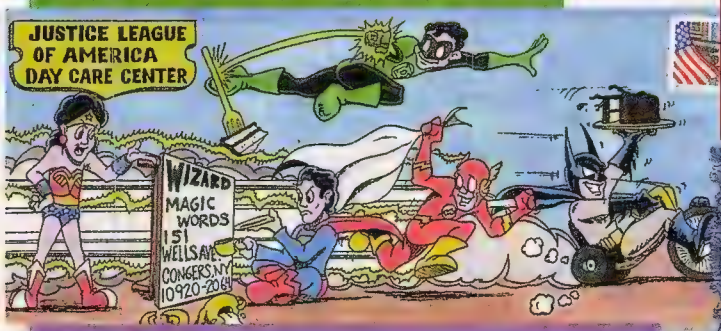

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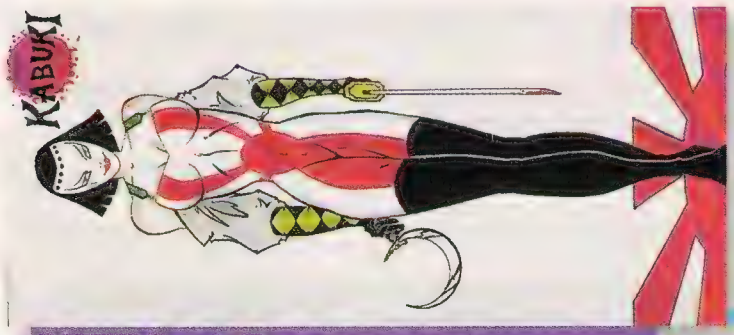
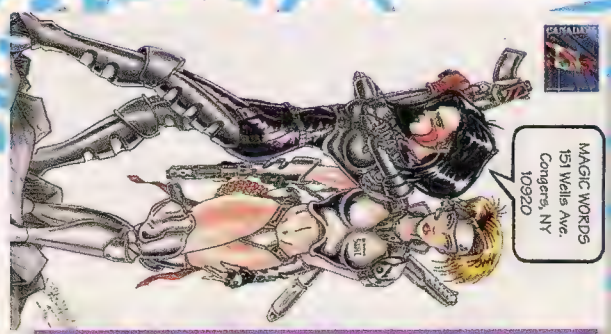


KABUKI Ernesto Chavez La Puente, CA



BATTLE ANGEL ALITA & DOMINION OFFICER
Brad M. Haffey Milton Ills, Ontario, Canada

would cause people to rethink what they consider "myths," but organized religion would continue largely unchanged. I also think that if superpowered mutants were about, they would be nowhere near as feared or hated as they are in the Marvel Universe. Quite to the contrary; I think they would be heroes or celebrities.

The one thing I'm sure of is that secret identities wouldn't last long. If you take a look at the scrutiny that the everyday lives of celebrities like Michael Jordan or Madonna are under, I think you'll see that the kind of privacy a secret identity would require is impossible in this day and age. When John F. Kennedy Jr. can't get a moment's peace and people are more concerned about how much money the cast of "Friends" is making than what's happening in their own community, a secret identity couldn't last long.

By the way, for a more "real life" version of superheroes, try Ruins, *a two-issue Marvel "What If?"-type mini-series written by Warren Ellis. It's swell. And speaking of those Thursday-night TV-types...*

Dear Jim,
Friends don't let friends get "Friends" haircuts!
Chet Collins
Naperville, IL

You said a mouthful, brother.

Hey Jim,
I bet you could kick Dean Cain's ass any day of the week.
Andrew McCash
Burr Ridge, IL

Damn straight. I'd slap that little "s"-curl pansy silly. Then I'd take his woman!

Hey, that just might be an idea. Think maybe I'll head off to Metropolis. Until then, I remain...

—Jim McLauchlin

Jim McLauchlin enjoys the maximum rockabilly stylings of The Reverend Horton Heat.

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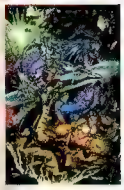

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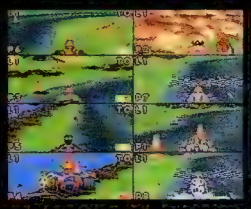

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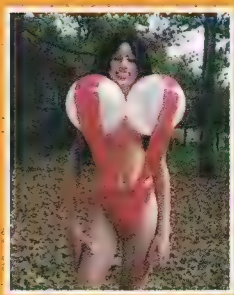
Waid/Augustyn Plan 'Flash' Hiatus; Morrison/Millar Take Over

Dark guardian inspired on mission of justice. "This is an omen…I shall become a comic geek, striking fear in the hearts of single women and sheep everywhere!" cried Can't-Get-Any Lad, before being crushed by a bus.

Mad Cow disease infects local comic con. "Twas an unmerciful engine of bovine destruction," commented battered witness. "That beastie smashed its way thru the fans and…and it made the wee ones milk it!"



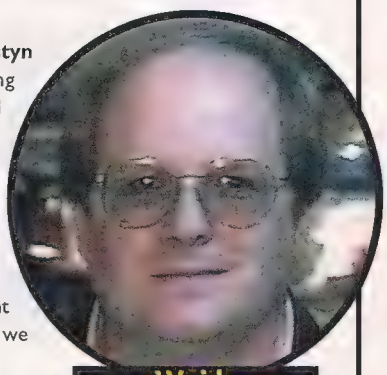
New Vampirella model unveiled at press conference. "Tee hee…I've got cuties," giggled gender-baffled superheroine. "And mono!"

The *Flash* creative team is taking a vacation.

Writer **Mark Waid** has announced that he and **Brian Augustyn** will be taking a year-long sabbatical from ***The Flash***, beginning tentatively with issue #130. However, Waid maintains that he and Augustyn will return to *The Flash* probably around issue #143.

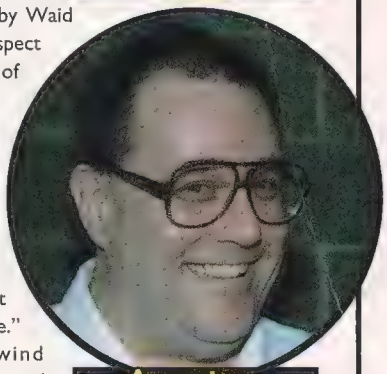
"I have no intention of leaving *The Flash* forever" said Waid. "Everybody knows they're going to have to pry this book out of my cold dead fingers, but right now, I really feel a bit burned out on *The Flash*.

"I just want to step back for a year to recharge my battery and then come back better than ever," added Waid. "It's more important for the issues to be good, than to be consecutive. Not only are we coming back, but we already have our story in place."



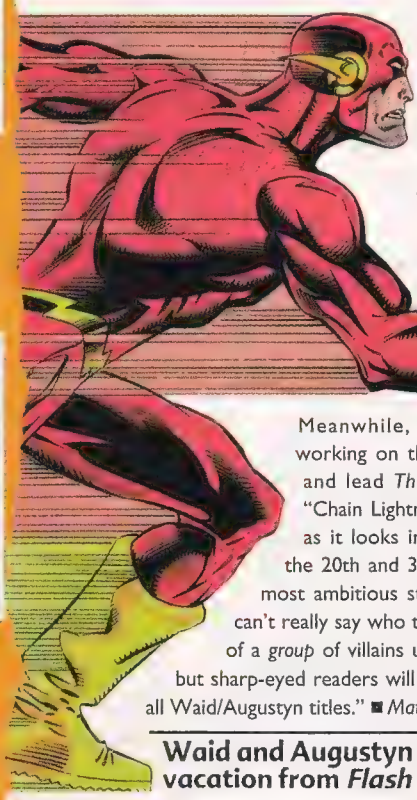
Waid

In their absence, **Grant Morrison** and **Mark Millar** will take over the creative reigns of the book. Morrison and Millar were handpicked by Waid and Augustyn as their successors. "They seem to have the same respect for Silver Age comics that we do," said Waid. "And have a way of taking the Silver Age stuff and putting a nice spin on it."



Augustyn

"Taking on *The Flash* is the one thing that can still make me feel this way, because this was my favorite comic when I was a kid," said Morrison. "When Mark [Waid] came to me, I came up with an entire year's worth of plots in five minutes. I'm going to cripple [the Flash] in my first issue and put him in a wheelchair. Then I'm thinking we'll have a race story which hasn't been done in a long time."



Morrison will wind down his 12-issue run with a story concerning a dark Flash character that will lead into Waid's return.

"I'm going to introduce the personification of the dark side of the speed force," said Morrison. "Basically, it's Death. And on the cover, we'll see the Flash running with a black skull-faced person following right behind. And it'll read, 'You can't outrun Death.' "

Meanwhile, Waid and Augustyn are already working on the story that will mark their return and lead *The Flash* up to issue #150. Entitled "Chain Lightning," the story will span 1,000 years as it looks in-depth at the Flash legacy between the 20th and 30th centuries. "It will be the biggest, most ambitious story we've ever told," said Waid. "I can't really say who the villain is—it's more along the likes of a *group* of villains unlike [Flash's old] Rogue's Gallery—but sharp-eyed readers will pick up clues throughout the year in all Waid/Augustyn titles." ■ *Matthew Senreich*

Waid and Augustyn take a one-year vacation from *Flash*

ahead

X-MEN/ WILDC.A.T.S CROSSOVER!

HULK MEETS PITT!

AND COMPANY UPDATES!

'X-Men/WildC.A.T.s' Crossover to Have WWII Flavor

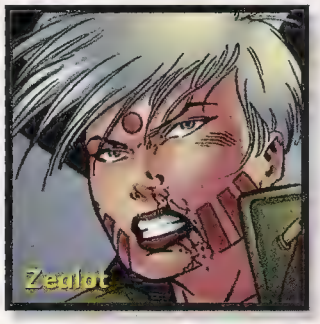
The four-issue ***X-Men/WildC.A.T.s*** crossover from **WildStorm** and **Marvel** that starts this February, isn't going to be your regular crossover. For example, remember when **Wolverine** and **Zealot** teamed up in World War II? How about **Grifter** and **Jean Grey**, while she was Marvel Girl? Not ringing any bells? Just wait. It will.

"It's not going to be a linear story as such, it's going to take place over the last 50 years, and spotlight the various meetings of the WildC.A.T.s and X-Men through the decades," WildStorm editor Mike Heisler said. "The first issue takes place during World War II, and features the first meeting of Wolverine and Zealot."

X-Men/WildC.A.T.s #2 will be set in the early days of the X-Men, and will feature Jean Grey (as the original Marvel Girl) and Grifter in the days of the Team One WildC.A.T.s and Professor Xavier's original X-Men. Issue #3 will feature the team's early incarnations against a common threat, and issue #4 will show future versions of both teams, set in the X-Men's "Days of Future Past" timeline.

Issues #1 and #3 will be produced by WildStorm, and issues #2 and #4 will be produced by Marvel. The WildStorm issues will both be written by **Scott Lobdell**. Issue #1 will be penciled and inked by **Travis Charest**, and issue #3 will be penciled by **Jim Lee** and inked by **Scott Williams**. At press time, Marvel was negotiating with creative teams for #2 and #4.

Why take this retroactive continuity approach? WildStorm founder and former X-Men artist Lee said it was time to do something different. "I wanted to show the growth of the two teams in a realistic way," he said. "The story makes it clear that the X-Men and the WildC.A.T.s exist on the same Earth, so naturally, they would've run into each other before. We wanted to intertwine the histories of the two teams a little." ■ *Matthew Brady*



'Bone' Leaves Image, Smith to Self-Publish Again

In a move described as both expected and welcomed, **Cartoon Books** has ended its 18-month relationship with **Image Comics**, and will again take control of all aspects of production and distribution of ***Bone***.

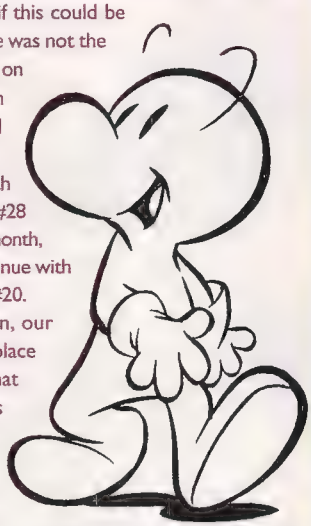
"I've been at Image for the time I needed to be," explained Cartoon Books' founder and *Bone* creator **Jeff Smith**. "The distribution system two years back or so looked to me like the stock market in 1929—there was a crash and the financial world went topsy-turvy and people went crazy. We decided we needed a safe place to put our money, in a sense."

Image's Executive Director **Larry Marder**, concurred. "Cartoon Books asked to come on board when the distribution system was starting to unravel," he said. "Jeff is a pretty smart, canny person and saw the handwriting on the wall, when a lot of people in comics—particularly in alternative comics—were in denial. Because we're such good friends, he saw an opportunity and called to ask if this could be arranged. It took us a little by surprise because *Bone* was not the kind of title we were known for. But we'd just taken on **Groo** as well, and it seemed like a chance to broaden our image—no pun intended. It seemed like a good deal for all."

The transition back to self-publishing for Smith will be in two stages, beginning in March 1997. *Bone* #28 will be solicited by Cartoon Books for shipping that month, while publication of the *Bone* encore series will continue with Image until June 1997, with the reprinting of *Bone* #20.

"For books like *Bone*, when we take them on, our hope is that Image can be a kind of safe harbor, a place for people to catch their balance, to figure out what they want to do next," Marder said. "We've always felt that—for non-partners—Image was a place to pass through.

"I'm really glad that Jeff Smith and Cartoon Books feel confident enough to take the reins back in their own hands," he concluded. ■ *Patrick Daniel O'Neill*



Jeff Smith takes Fone Bone (above) home to Cartoon Books

BUZZ BOX

The inside scoop on the comic industry

• Insiders indicate that "**Amalgam**: Wave 2" is a done deal between DC and Marvel, slated for spring. Among the 12 rumored one-shots are ***Dark Claw Adventures*** (done in an animated style), ***Spider-Boy Team-Up***, ***Super-Soldier: Man of War***, ***JLX Unleashed***, ***Lobo the Duck***, ***Iron Lantern***, ***Magneto and the Magnetic Men***, ***Bat-Thing***, ***Challengers of the Fantastic***, ***Thorion of New Asgard***, ***Generation Hex*** and ***X-Patrol***. It is unknown, however, if the speculated Amalgam will be attached to a *Marvel versus DC*-type event. We'll keep you posted when and *if* any of these titles are confirmed.

• Insiders at Marvel say they have the following mutant mini-series and one-shots on tap in '97: ***Beast*** mini-series (March), ***Psylocke*** mini-series (May), ***Hellfire Club*** mini-series (September) and a ***Wolverine Manga*** one-shot (October).

• Rumor are circulating that the ethnically diverse **Milestone Media** line from **DC Comics** has been canceled. DC was unable to confirm the rumor.

HULK AND PITT GET READY TO RUMBLE

Pitt (left) and Hulk meet courtesy of old *Hulk* team, David and Keown

Batten down the hatches and cover your ears, 'cause the **Hulk** and **Pitt** are ready to rumble!

Marvel's Green Goliath, the Hulk, will tackle Full Bleed Studios' Gray Gargantuan, Pitt, in a 48-page one-shot entitled *Incredible Hulk/Pitt* due out this January. **Peter David** is set to write the crossover with **Dale Keown** as artist on the project, reuniting the unforgettable *Incredible Hulk* team of the early '90s.

"It'll be just like the old days," said David. "I would have been crazy to pass this up."

Incredible Hulk/Pitt promises to feature a monstrous fight between the two similar-looking behemoths. "If they don't have some kind of battle, I think fans will be disappointed," said David. "There will be a Hulk/Pitt rivalry as it were, which goes back to the early days of mankind. It kicks off of the notion that every so often you run into somebody you just don't like, and there are any number of reasons for that."

The one-shot crossover begins as **Rick Jones** is asked to visit an orphanage where a young boy mysteriously landed on its doorstep. With no trace of where he came from, the boy keeps repeating that his name is **Timmy** and that there is a large "hulking" creature chasing him. "This is where we start," said David. "With *Incredible Hulk/Pitt*, I decided to take the concept that these two characters exist in different worlds. By that token, I play very fast and loose with the concept of reality and imagination, and what is reality, and how much we shape it and how much it shapes us.

"We're dealing with characters who are polar opposites," said David. "You have Pitt who is an alien character moving towards humanity, and you have Hulk who is a human character moving away from humanity—they actually see that in each other and don't like it." ■ *Matthew Senreich*

Randy Queen Takes 'Darkchylde' to Image

Image Comics has given new life to ***Darkchylde***.

Randy Queen announced that he will be taking his five-issue *Darkchylde* mini-series from **Maximum Press** to Image Comics beginning with issue #4, scheduled to hit stores in February. With the move to Image, *Darkchylde* will reduce its cover price from $2.95 to $2.50, upgrade to a better paper stock and add extra pages of artwork to the story.

"It just seemed like the best thing to do at this time," said Queen.

Queen started *Darkchylde* at Maximum Press back in June 1996, debuting at No. 46 on Diamond's Top 100 List. *Darkchylde*'s premise focuses on a horror-oriented tale that combines elements from *Swamp Thing* and *Spawn*.

"When I pitched the idea at the beginning, Maximum jumped on it really quickly," said Queen. "If they were good campers and everybody played fair, then I would still be there."

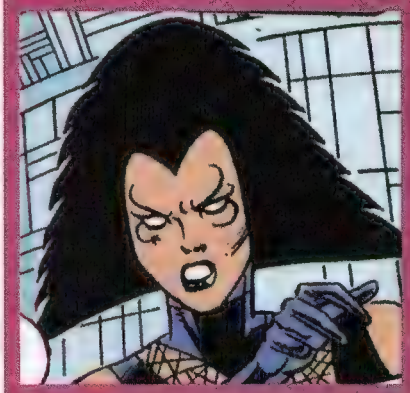
When asked about *Darkchylde*'s relocation to Image, Maximum Press Publisher **Rob Liefeld** commented, "We wish Randy Queen the best and we continue to think *Darkchylde* is a great book."

Queen's move to Image stemmed from difficulties Maximum Press had in shipping *Darkchylde* #4 on time. "I don't wish Rob Liefeld any ill will, but from a business standpoint, things just didn't work out," said Queen. "It ended because we just could no longer see eye to eye on how things should be done."

Darkchylde will now become part of the Image whole, like ***A Distant Soil***, and not fall under a specific studio's jurisdiction. Owned by Queen, *Darkchylde* will remain connected to his Majesty Graphics, but contain the Image logo. Even before the series hits the stands, *Darkchylde* will debut at Image in a five-page *Darkchylde* preview in ***Spawn* #56** which ships in December.

"With myself as the MC and Image as the host, as long as people are into it, I'll keep doing *Darkchylde*," said Queen. "So don't be surprised if the series expands beyond issue #5, because I am already plotting and working on #6." ■ *Matthew Senreich*

We Looked It Up



Lilandra (Lil•an•druh) Marvel. 1 Empress of the Shi'ar Empire, an interstellar alien race 2 Long-time friend of the X-Men who took Charles Xavier as her consort 3 Was the driving force to find and kill the Phoenix before it destroyed the entire galaxy

JLA/WildC.A.T.s to Meet in One-Shot

The heroes of **WildStorm** will get to test their mettle in February, when the JLA comes to town. ***JLA/WildC.A.T.s***, a 64-page, prestige-format one-shot, will feature the two team's historic meeting.

Written and drawn by the regular *JLA* creative team of writer **Grant Morrison**, penciler **Howard Porter** and inker **John Dell**, *JLA/WildC.A.T.s*' production is being entirely handled by DC in return for WildStorm's handling of late '97's ***Batman/Gen13***.

The JLA invade the WildStorm Universe in February

So how do the teams meet? "The basic skinny is that a new villain discovers the armory of The Lord of Time, a former Justice League villain, and goes back in time to prevent the DC heroes from completing their origins, eliminating the Justice League in the process," DC editor **Ruben Diaz** explained. "The Justice League catches wind of this, and as they track him down through the time/space continuum, they weaken it to the point where it cracks and they wind up in the Image Universe."

What follows from there on out, Diaz explained, is pure "classic" crossover. "The JLA will obviously enlist the aid of the WildC.A.T.s to try and find a way back to the DCU. In the course of the story, we'll have Image characters running around the DCU, a couple of big fights, and at the end of the day, everyone will end up back home," Diaz said.

Also, Diaz said that fans don't need to worry about either team not sounding or acting like themselves, a problem with many crossovers. "Grant is a big fan of the WildC.A.T.s, and is very comfortable with their continuity," Diaz said. "So this should really appeal to fans of both series. Part of the appeal will be to see how the DC characters fit into the Image Universe, and vice versa.

"I look at this the same way I did with the [1982] ***X-Men/Teen Titans*** crossover," Diaz said. "That crossover was just so big and impressive, and you knew you were getting the best of each company. We hope to pull that off in this project as well." ■ *Matthew Brady*

Sin City One-Shot Among '97 Legend Projects Planned

Legend, the creator-owned imprint published by **Dark Horse Comics**, has a slew of projects planned for the new year.

Legend founder **Frank Miller** will be back with another Sin City one-shot, this one called ***Sin City: Sex and Violence***. It continues the story of Dalia, the assassin-to-be introduced in the "Blue Eyes" story from *Sin City: Lost, Lonely, and Lethal*. And like that volume, *Sex and Violence* will be printed in black, white and blue. Why blue? "Blue is the character's trademark color," Miller explained. "It's a variation of the same idea I used in *The Babe Wore Red*, except that Dalia is a much more pivotal Sin City character. This is the story of an assassin on her first professional assignment—so she's bound to make a mistake or two." *Sin City: Sex and Violence* ships in March.

Legend newcomer **Walt Simonson** promises a sequel to the ***Star Slammers*** mini-series he did at Malibu Comics' late Bravura imprint, probably for late in the year. He described it as an eight-issue story in two four-issue arcs—"less complex, but longer" than the original story.

Coming in May will be the next installment in the life of **Paul Chadwick**'s **Concrete—*Strange Armor***. Few details were available on the series, but it will be a five-issue run.

Undoubtedly, the most unusual of the 1997 Legend projects is ***Hellboy: The Lost Army***, a prose novel by **Christopher Golden**, with illustrations by Hellboy creator **Mike Mignola**. In the story, Hellboy is assigned to discover the fate of a lost American archaeological team searching for a missing army from 525 BC.

"Chris Golden came to me with an idea for a text piece in the back of *Hellboy* and that turned into the novel," Mignola recalled. "He pitched the idea and I said it sounded great—cave spiders, underground civilizations, real old Tarzan-type pulp stories."

Hellboy: The Lost Army ships in March, at a cover price of $14.95.

Also in the hopper from Mignola is a two-issue Hellboy mini-series, ***Almost Colossus***, that ties up loose ends from previous series, and involves a homunculus (a miniature humanoid that serves the cause of evil) and a "gooey monster." After that, look for another two-issue mini-series and a Christmas '97 special, with contributions from **Gary Gianni** and **Steve Purcell**.

In late spring, ***Madman*** creator **Michael Allred** will release a three-issue ***Superman vs. Madman*** crossover, followed in June by the debut of an all-new series called ***Red Rocket 7*** (see related story). ■ *Patrick Daniel O'Neill*

Frank Miller returns to Sin City in March

NEWS BITES

Superman Creators to be Immortalized

Legendary **Superman** creators **Jerry Siegel** and **Joe Shuster** are set to go down in history.

Siegel, who passed away in January 1996, will have a monument dedicated in his honor in his hometown of Cleveland. Siegel's wife Joanne is currently speaking with the Western Reserve Historical Society and the Great Lakes Science Center to hammer out the details of what the memorial should be. She plans to dedicate her husband's typewriter, glasses, file cabinet full of writing and even an urn containing half of Jerry Siegel's ashes to the memorial.

A spokesman for Mayor Michael White of Cleveland stated that the city is prepared to do whatever it takes to honor both Siegel and fellow Superman creator Joe Shuster, who died in 1992. Siegel and Shuster both attended a Cleveland high school where they conjured up the Man of Steel. ■ *Matthew Senreich*

Marvel Lets 115 Employees Go

Marvel Entertainment Group laid off 115 people in the comic book division in November—the majority in the sales, marketing and production areas—after reporting a $12.5 million third-quarter loss, its sixth consecutive quarterly loss.

The announcement of layoffs came one week after financier **Ron Perelman**—whose holding company controls about 80 percent of the company—offered to pay $350 million for new Marvel shares of stock in a bid to keep the company out of bankruptcy.

Shareholders sued to block Perelman's bid, saying the offer would further dilute the value of the declining stock. ■ *Glenn Haight*

Dark Horse Puts Star Wars into Graphic Story Album

Several years after the success of its ***Aliens: Tribes***, **Dark Horse Comics** is returning to the graphic story album format for the new ***Star Wars: Dark Forces—Soldiers for the Empire***. The format combines a novella-length prose story with facing pages of fully painted art.

The new album presents the story of Imperial officer Kyle Katarn, a loyal servant of the Empire until the Empire takes his father's life. That turns Katarn into a spy for the Rebel Alliance…a spy who is picked to take on a suicide run. The characters and situations are developed from the *Star Wars: Dark Forces* interactive games.

Written by **William C. Dietz** (*The Final Battle*) with art by **Dean Williams**, who did the covers to Dark Horse's *Tarzan: The Lost Adventure*, the book ships in March at a cover price of $24.95.

According to Promotion Manager Michael Martens, Dark Horse is also negotiating for an ***X-Files*** graphic story album, with a story treatment by *X-Files* creator **Chris Carter**. The graphic story album license would be separate from the regular comics license, so it would not interfere with the ongoing Topps comics series. ■ *Patrick Daniel O'Neill*

CORRECTION

BIG Entertainment will continue to publish comic books from 1997 on, in the form of two- and three-issue series.

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Waid/Augustyn Sign on for 'JLA: Year One'

Mark Waid and Brian Augustyn have agreed to write a 12-issue series for **DC Comics** entitled ***JLA: Year One***.

Set to begin this spring, *JLA: Year One* will feature the original five members of the Silver Age JLA including **The Flash** (a.k.a. Barry Allen), **Green Lantern** (a.k.a. Hal Jordan), **Black Canary**, **Aquaman** and **Martian Manhunter**. **Barry Kitson** (*Azrael*) will pencil. "This series will take place in the formative stage of the modern DC Universe," said Waid. "It will be a nod to ***Untold Tales of Spider-Man***, telling stories of the Justice League in between stories we already know."

Along that line, *JLA: Year One* will focus less on the Silver Age stories with supervillains and more on the relationships between the members of the group.

"We'll concentrate on the interpersonal dynamics like the friendship between Hal and Barry," said Waid. "That friendship started out more as a rivalry. Hal was a hot-shot, cocky, seat-of-the-pants guy and Barry was a methodical police scientist. Why should they like each other?"

The main premise of the maxi-series will be the re-emergence of the Justice League in the DC Universe during the Silver Age and how existing superhero groups may have responded to the formation of the JLA.

"It's the story of the passing of the torch," said Waid. "Once the JLA comes back on the scene, they eclipse the likes of the **Challengers** [of the Unknown] and **Doom Patrol**. I want to see how Hal Jordan and [Doom Patrol's] Larry Trainor know each other as test pilots."

Up to this point, DC's "Year One" projects have never exceeded four issues. "It was Barry Kitson's idea to make it 12 issues," said Waid. "We realized how much was here and wanted to really explore it to its fullest potential." ■ *Matthew Senreich*

Catching Up With...

JAE LEE AND 'HELLSHOCK'

Jae Lee burst onto the comics scene in 1991, penciling Marvel's *Namor the Sub-Mariner*. After writing and drawing a *Hellshock* mini-series for Image Comics in 1994, he vanished from the industry. But there was a good reason: Lee has been researching, writing and drawing a new ongoing *Hellshock* series for Image scheduled for January. The new *Hellshock* series plans to take the protagonist Daniel from the mini-series and continue to follow the difficult life he leads as an offspring of a human mother and a fallen angel father. We decided to track down Lee and ask him about his plans for the new series.

Photo by J. Schuyler

What is the first story arc of *Hellshock* about?
It starts off in an institution, and I try to examine the beliefs of the characters. Daniel, the main character who is also Hellshock, is the Peter Pan of religion. He endorses miracles and magic, everything that is beautiful. He has faith and believes. Whereas Christina, who is his psychiatrist, takes a very cold, hard look at reality, a very pragmatic approach. So I examine the dynamics between the two characters and their beliefs. From there, we see what happens when a character like Christina starts to accept Daniel's view of the world. When she starts to believe, the two of them start out on a journey together to explore this magical universe that Christina has closed her eyes to all of her life.

What is Daniel's origin?
The whole story is based on the Grigori angels. There were many types of angels and the lowest sphere is a group called the Grigori angels. They're supposedly the closest to mankind. They had the task of watching over man to give them the correct ways. What happened was once they got an eye for mortal women, lust replaced their emotions. They started spending their days raping. All of the children spawned there are half-breeds called the Nefilim. Daniel is a half-breed. All of the Grigori angels were banished by God to Hell with no chance at redemption, leaving behind all the Nefilim. Daniel is trying to salvage redemption for all the Nefilim, his so-called brothers. He is like a shepherd trying to lead the Nefilim angels to redemption.

How will Daniel's mission affect the story?
The story will have the Grigori angels escaping from Hell and all hell will break loose on Earth. Daniel's task will be to corral these guys. And yes, his father will be involved.

Where does this series take place in relation to the mini-series?
The first story arc in the regular series starts as a prequel to the mini-series.

What kind of research did you do for this series?
This project has been my main focus for the past few years. When I did the mini-series, all I knew then was that I wanted to do something about the son of an angel and a mortal mother. I really didn't know any background or mythology. That's one of the reasons I decided to take my time with this. For a year alone, I did research. I wanted to make it as realistic as possible and the characters very believable. I did more studying for this than anything even in college.

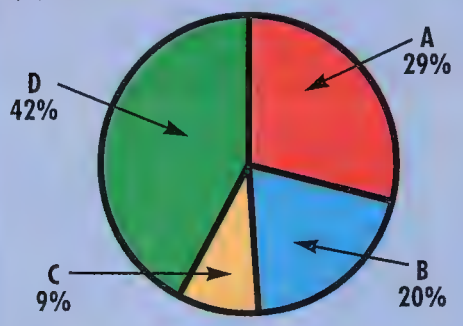
Have you felt like you've distanced yourself from the comic industry?
Probably, but that might be a good thing. It might provide a unique approach from what's typically out there. As I've grown older, I've seen the deficiency of my work. You take two years away from drawing and you can get an objective point of view. I realized that I lacked storytelling here or was like, "What was I thinking here?" But the most important thing right now is storytelling, and this book will be story-driven. ■ *Matthew Senreich*

Question of the Month

To the Batcave! **DC Comics** is experimenting in a year-long project with the Batman books to see if self-contained stories work better than week-to-week, multiple book crossovers. For this month's poll, we used our "Wizard World" forum on America Online to ask what everyone thought of this.

Keeping the recent change in the Batman books in mind, our first question was: Of the Batman books, which title is your favorite?

A) *Batman;* **B)** *Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight;* **C)** *Batman: Shadow of the Bat;* **D)** *Detective Comics*



We also asked our online pals their opinions on the following questions:

- Do you like having the Batman stories self-contained: Yes **(70%)** or No **(30%)**?
- Of all the Batman supporting-cast titles, which do you like the best: *Robin* **(46%)**, *Nightwing* **(30%)**, *Azrael* **(22%)** or *Catwoman* **(2%)**?
- Which supporting cast member of Batman who doesn't have his or her own title, would you like to see get one: Joker **(33%)**, Oracle **(19%)**, Spoiler **(9%)**, Huntress **(7%)**, Commissioner Gordon **(7%)**, Harvey Bullock **(7%)** or none of the above **(18%)**?

■ *Sorrell Booke*

SPOTLIGHT ON:

TITLE: The Copybook Tales
CREATORS: J. Torres & Tim Levins
PUBLISHER: Slave Labor Graphics
CURRENT ISSUE: Issue #3 will hit stands in February
BACK ISSUES: *The Copybook Tales* #1 and #2 were published by Slave Labor Graphics.

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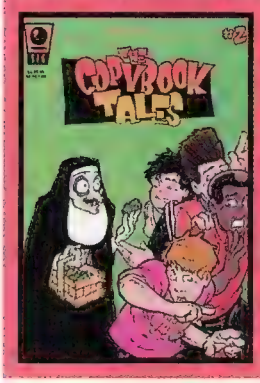

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WHAT'S UP ON WIZARD WORLD

In late January, Wizard Worlders get an exclusive sneak preview of the 10-volume "Street Fighter 2 V" video series. This collection translates and packages the 29 episodes of the popular animated series from Japan. As an added bonus, on January 27 from 8-9 p.m. (EST), Manga Entertainment representatives will be online to chat with "Wizard World" 's Manga/Anime Club.

The "Wizard World" online staff has grown significantly. Please drop an e-mail or an instant message to our new interns WizEitan (Eitan Shapiro), WizLILMike (Mike Compos) and WizGoat (Nick Kask). These online interns help host chats, post messages on the boards and work with clubs. Welcome aboard, guys!

Call 800-754-4400 to hook up to "Wizard World" on America Online. You'll get free software and 15 hours of free online time. Keyword: Wizard.

CHAT SCHEDULES FOR THE SPECIAL EVENTS ROOM

(Note: All chats are weekly unless otherwise noted.)

MONDAY

- **MANGA/ANIME**
  Time: 8-9 p.m. (EST)
  January 6, 13, 27
- **BREAKING IN** Featuring: **David Campiti**
  Time: 8-9 p.m. (EST)
  January 20
- **WILDSTORM**
  Time: 9-10 p.m. (EST)
  January 6, 20
- **TOP COW**
  Time: 9-10 p.m. (EST)
  January 13, 27

TUESDAY

- ***WIZARD* UNPLUGGED** Featuring: **Real, live funky-fresh *Wizard* Editors**
  Time: 8-9 p.m. (EST)
- **X-MEN TRIVIA** Featuring: **X-Pert Benny Powell**
  Time: 9-10 p.m. (EST)

WEDNESDAY

- **ASTEROID X CLUB**
  Time: 6-7 p.m. (EST)
- **AGE OF APOCALYPSE CLUB**
  Time: 7-8 p.m. (EST)
- **TRIVIA CHAT** Featuring: *Wizard* Freelancer Matt Brady
  Time: 8-9 p.m. (EST)
  January 8, 22
- **AVENGERS ASSEMBLE**
  Time: 9-10 p.m. (EST)

THURSDAY

- **MYSTERY GUEST** Featuring **Joanna Sandsmark & Mystery Guest**
  Time: 8-9 p.m. (EST)
  January 16
- **WEBHEADS CLUB**
  Time: 9-10 p.m. (EST)
- ***INQUEST* CHAT** Featuring: *InQuest* 's **Rick Moscatello**
  Time: 10-11 p.m. (EST)
  December 5, 12, 19

FRIDAY

- **LOOP (LEGION OF OVERPOWER, MARVEL CCG)**
  Time: 9-10 p.m. (EST)

SATURDAY

- **FANTASTIC FOUR CLUB**
  Time: 9-10 p.m. (EST)

SUNDAY

- **SANDMAN100 COMIC BOOK CHAT**
  Time: 8-10 p.m. (EST)

■ *Buddy Scalera* (WizardTGTC@aol.com)

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Allred Preps Superman/Madman Crossover

Mike Allred will be working like a madman in 1997.

Allred has announced three big projects slated for 1997, including a three-issue ***Superman/Madman*** crossover, a three-prong multi-media event surrounding his new creator-owned project ***Red Rocket 7*** and a restructuring of ***Madman Comics***.

"The idea is to have all these things come out monthly," said Allred. "[We want to] have most of these done before we release the first sometime in spring."

Scheduled for a late spring release, *Superman/Madman* will feature a classic Superman character. "There will be no reference to the changes that have happened to Superman over the past 15 years," said Allred. "I don't contradict any of the current continuity, but I won't acknowledge it either."

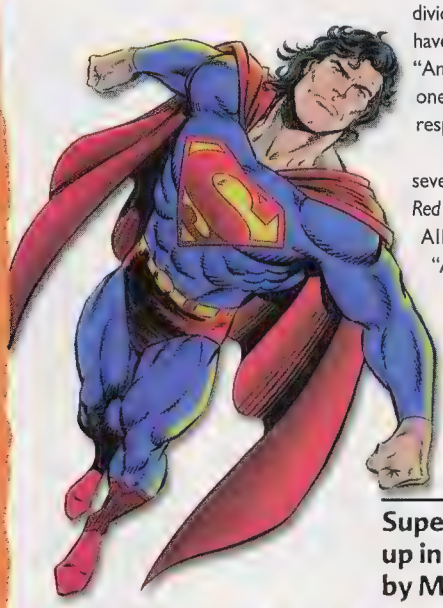
Stemming from a scientific experiment gone awry, Superman and **Frank Einstein** (Madman) will get amalgamized for a brief period before separating back into themselves. "The main thrust of the story is that because of this fluke incident, Superman's powers will have been divided eight ways, and Superman and Frank have to find who got the pieces," said Allred. "And we'll find out in the third issue that one of Superman's all-time classic foes was responsible for most of what happened."

Dark Horse Comics will release the seven-issue *Red Rocket 7* mini-series in June. *Red Rocket 7* is the catalyst for the release of Allred's upcoming independent film "Astroesque" and Allred's band Red Rocket 7's launching of its new CD, both of which will tie into the comic series.

Red Rocket 7 is about a clone with great musical talent seeking refuge on Earth from alien beings looking to destroy him, five other Red Rocket clones and the original Red Rocket. "I'm alive with this story," said Allred. "And I think it's the greatest thing I've ever come up with."

Allred plans to put out *Madman Comics* #12-#15 beginning in August after an almost six-month hiatus, overlapping *Red Rocket 7*. "We were releasing *Madman* bimonthly, but when my schedule went insane with all these new projects, it made more sense to release *Madman* in groups," said Allred. "So we'll keep continuing *Madman* as a regular series, but it'll now probably read like lots of mini-series."

Entitled "The Exit of Dr. Boiffard," *Madman Comics* #12-#15 will continue where issue #11 left off, with Frank having a vision of his former life which implied he was a cold-blooded assassin. "The issues will stand on their own too," said Allred. "But *Madman* readers will still get a continuing storyline." ■ *Matthew Senreich*



Superman and Madman team up in '97, written and drawn by Mike Allred

Broadway Shuts Down

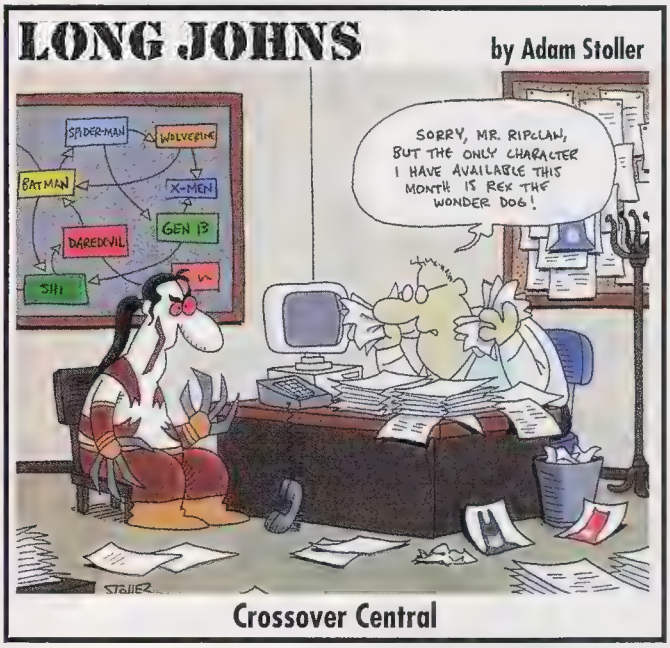
The lights have finally gone down on Broadway.

Broadway Comics ceased publication November 4, following corporate reshuffling by parent company Golden Books, which had acquired Broadway Entertainment (including Lorne Michaels' Broadway Video) several months earlier.

Knights on Broadway #3, ***Fatale*** #6 and ***Star Seed*** #9, in addition to the ***Fatale: Inherit the Earth*** trade paperback and hardcover, were the final Broadway Comics solicitations for the immediate future.

"Given the state of the market, I'm not surprised," said company co-founder and Editor-in-Chief **Jim Shooter**, citing Marvel Comics' recent layoffs as proof of a more troubled industry."

Departing Broadway in the wake of its own layoffs are Marketing Manager **Pauline Weiss**, Director of Marketing Operations **Pete Gyrich**, Managing Editor **Debbie Fix**, Executive Editors **Janet Jackson** and **Joseph James**, and Publisher **Barbara Morcerf**. Spared in the cutbacks were Broadway President **Winston Fowlkes** and Shooter, who will remain to assess Golden's various licensed properties. Golden, which in the past decades has published comics under the Dell, Whitman and Gold Key imprints, owns the rights to such characters as **Turok** and **Solar** (currently licensed to Shooter's old stomping grounds **Acclaim/Valiant**), the **Lone Ranger** and the properties of the defunct **Defiant Comics**, also launched by Shooter. ■ *Scott Beatty*



Crossover Central

company updates

AC COMICS

AC will reprint *FemForce* #1 and #2 in the 68-page *The Untold Origins of FemForce* in January.

CHAOS! COMICS

In February, check out *Lady Death: The Crucible* #3 (of 6), as Lady Death continues her most bloodthirsty adventure yet! And witness the shocking ending as Lady Death's sword Darkness is obliterated! . . . This month also sees the encore presentation of *Evil Ernie* #5 (of 5) as Chaos! republishes the epic that started the whole shebang five years ago!

COMIC BOOK LEGAL DEFENSE FUND

A special *Strangers in Paradise* T-shirt will be available through the CBLDF in March. It features Francine getting burned at the stake, surrounded by comics.

CRUSADE ENTERTAINMENT

Crusade has started producing Sneak Attack Editions, which are special flip-book previews of the company's future titles, with original covers and five- to seven-page stories that you won't see in the regular titles. February's *Manga Shi 2000* #1 includes a Sneak Attack of *Shi: Heaven and Earth*, the new Shi series shipping the first half of 1997 in which Ano discovers that what she knew about her father and brother's deaths was a lie, and we learn more about Yuri Ishikawa, the 17th century Shi.

DARK HORSE COMICS

March's *Han Solo at Star's End* is an action-packed one-shot reprinting the old newspaper strips by Alfredo Alcala. . . . Still need more of a Star Wars fix? Then check out the *Return of the Jedi* trade paperback in March, adapting the final movie in the trilogy, with an all-new Hildebrandt cover. . . . Look for a *Blade of the Immortal* trade paperback reprinting the first six issues of the highly praised manga. It ships in March with a suggested retail of $12.95.

continued on page 24

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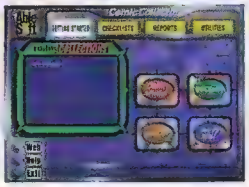

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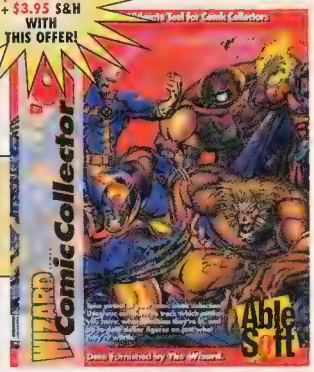

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Ramos and Waid Join 'Ash' Team for Six Issues

"At Event, we're trying to finally get the company, specifically *Ash*, back on track," said **Joe Quesada**. "I'm looking at 1997, and I want to reshape Event to have quality books on hopefully a monthly schedule."

In order to accomplish this, Event Comics has announced that the **Augustyn** team of **Mark Waid, Brian Augustyn** and **Humberto Ramos** have signed on to do a six-issue run of *Ash* beginning in spring 1997. "We're trying to guarantee the fans that *Ash* will come out monthly," said Quesada. "So **Jimmy [Palmiotti]** and I took our only child and put it in the hands of very capable people."

"Humberto, Brian and I hope to use this as a springboard to tell a good story," said Waid. "And possibly even have it introduce a creator-owned character in the Event Universe sometime in 1997."

Following the six-month Waid/Augustyn/Ramos stint, Quesada will jump back on board in November and pencil *Ash* on a monthly schedule with **James Robinson** writing. Quesada returns just in time for *Ash*'s three-year anniversary.

"From now till November, I'm going to be working on getting some issues in the can," said Quesada. "So when I come back, I'll shock the world and draw monthly.

"With Mark, Humberto, Brian and James, we're trying to get sort of an extended family thing going here," said Quesada. "And we'll possibly add to the Event line in 1997."

Over the course of the next year, Event plans to establish a handful of new villains in *Ash* and delve into the origin of characters that Quesada and Palmiotti may have left unsettled. "There won't be a 'Death of Ash' or anything like that this year," said Quesada. "But we are trying to promise that we'll tell you who this character is and tell that on a monthly basis." ■ *Matthew Senreich*

continued from page 23

DC COMICS

Batman and Spider-Man will team up once again in an April one-shot. A creative team has yet to be chosen....The Legionnaires stranded in the 20th century will finally return home to the 30th century in *Legionnaires* #50....March's *Sandman Mystery Theatre* #50 guest-stars all of the Sandmans throughout DC history....DC's 1997 annuals will have the theme of "Pulp Heroes."...Garth Ennis and Christian Alamy will team up for April's *Enemy Ace* mini-series, set not in WWI, but WWII....April's *Weird War Tales*, a four-issue mini-series done in anthology format for Vertigo, features work by Garth Ennis, Sam Glanzman and more....The former *Detective Comics* team of Alan Grant and Norm Breyfogle reteam for an *Anarky* mini-series in March, starring the good-intentioned teenage Batman foe.

EVENT COMICS

February's *The Ash Files* presents everything you need to know about Ash, including costume and equipment designs, blueprints and maps, plus the secrets of his powers. It features several original pieces by Joe Quesada, Jimmy Palmiotti and others.

HALL OF HEROES

Hall of Heroes Presents #0, set for March release, will reunite three of the original Hall of Heroes crew, Matt Martin (*Snowman*), Trent Kamuga (*Greed*) and Ethan Van Sciver (*Cyberfrog*), and will offer three variant covers, one by each of the artists.

Vampirella Lives #3

HARRIS COMICS

Vampirella Lives #3 concludes the series, as Vampi must choose between revenge and saving lives. Can she save the city of Whitechapel without killing everyone in it? It ships in February with a cover by J. Scott Campbell.... Keep your eyes peeled this February for a high-quality lithograph featuring Frank Frazetta's gorgeous artwork from the *25th Anniversary Special*. It retails for $20.

WildStorm's Captain America print

IMAGE COMICS

• ARIA PRESS

Come January, look for a special *A Distant Soil* project entitled *Images of A Distant Soil* which will have pin-ups from David Lapham, Dave Sim, Walt Simonson, Jim Valentino and more. The cover will feature *ADS*'s Sir Galahad meeting *Bone*'s Red Dragon.

• HOMAGE COMICS

An *Astro City: Life in the Big City* trade paperback, donated to New Jersey's Caldwell Public Library by retailer David Bower, was such a big hit, that the library ordered additional copies to keep up with the demand.

• TOP COW COMICS

Brandon Peterson's *Arcanum* #1 debuts in March, leaping from the pages of the *Medieval Spawn/Witchblade* mini-series. The series focuses on a story of people all over the Earth who are drawn into the apocalyptic struggle for the final fate of the planet.... March's *Witchblade* #13 reveals the secret past of modeling mogul Donnette Boucher and her connection to Kenneth Irons.

• WILDSTORM PRODUCTIONS

Gen¹ Bootleg #5, by Terry Moore and Tommy Coker, sees Fairchild discover that she's lost 30 minutes of her life, and the cause of this time lapse has been dead for over 50 years! The first of this two-parter ships in March.... Straight from the pages of *WildC.A.T.s* comes *Savant Garde* #1. Shipping in March, this new series by Barbara Kesel and Ryan Odagawa sees Savant heading back to her life of treasure hunting and the dangers that accompany that lifestyle. (Kesel also writes *WildC.A.T.s* #36 in March, which sets up the new *Savant Garde* series.)...Future comic art that WildStorm Fine Arts will feature in its line of limited-edition prints includes the cover to *Silver Surfer* #1 by John Buscema, *The Amazing Spider-Man* #40 by John Romita and a Captain America illustration by Travis Charest commissioned exclusively for this series. Printed on high-quality archival Arches watercolor paper, these prints are limited to 300 copies, signed by the artist and should run you about $150 a pop.

KITCHEN SINK PRESS

March sees the release of some nifty merchandise based on your favorite video games. There's mouse pads, T-shirts and mugs based on such video game hits as *Duke Nukem* and *SPQR*. Look for more game merchandise in the future.

LIGHTNING COMICS

Check out the company's website at http://www.menubytes.com/lightning....the third and final issue of *Greed: Cranial Disorder* returns the kid hero to black-and-white, as Greed goes up against C.J. and the Aqua Skeeziks. The March book offers two limited editions.

LONDON NIGHT STUDIOS

February's *Full Metal Fiction* #1, a brand-new 48-page anthology book starring LNS' most popular characters, features publisher Everette Harisse's return to the art world with a Razor story. It's suggested for mature readers.

MARVEL COMICS

Cable, the leader of X-Force, collides with the "Heroes Reborn" Universe in February's *Captain America* #6 by Rob Liefeld and Jeph Loeb.... February's *Sensational Spider-Man* #15 sees Spidey team up with Ka-Zar, leading into the launch of the new *Ka-Zar* series in March from Mark Waid and Andy Kubert....Juggernaut gets a 48-page one-shot in February, where Cain Marko takes over a whole town and wreaks havoc.

MAXIMUM PRESS

Avengelyne's "Possession" storyline kicks off in February with a pair of biweekly books (*Avengelyne* #10-#11), each shipping with a variant cover by Robert Napton and John Stinsman....*Cybrid* #1 debuts in February from Mike Miller and Robert Napton, as the master assassin Cybrid seeks vengeance on the forces that killed his true love....February's *Battlestar Galactica The Compendium* #1 features new material and several hard-to-find Battlestar Galactica stories from the early issues of *Asylum*....*Shaft* #1 debuts in February with art and a story by Rob Liefeld, as Youngblood's most popular member goes solo....The origin of Suprema is revealed in February's *Supreme* #46 by writer Alan Moore.

PIRATE PRESS

Look for Pirate Press to introduce a live Joshua model to promote its *Joshua: Pure Evil* series which should be hitting stands just in time for the winter holidays. And be sure to check out that fine-looking Elizabeth Almond character—she's pretty hot for a nun.

POWDER MONKEY PRODUCTIONS

CORRECTION: Powder Monkey (not Pirate Press, as originally reported last issue) has pin-ups by Mike Wieringo, David Mack and Ethan Van Sciver in the second issue of the four-issue mini-series *Europa and the Pirate Twins* due out in December.

SIRIUS ENTERTAINMENT

Finally! What was supposed to be 12 issues in length turned out to be 21, as Teri Wood's *Wandering Star* concludes in February. As for what happens, you'll just have to read it....February will debut *Roel*, a 32-page one-shot by Roel Wielinga, whose artwork is praised by acclaimed fantasy artists Boris Vallejo and Brom.

Where Are They Now?

RON LIM

"It's always nice to have popularity and be considered a hot artist," said Ron Lim. "But as long as there is a loyal readership and as long as I'm enjoying what I'm working on, being hot doesn't phase me one way or another."

Lim surfed to glory with an extended run on **Marvel's *Silver Surfer*** back in the late 1980s. Beginning with *Silver Surfer* #15, Lim helped spark a new era for the character, which was enhanced by the addition of writer **Jim Starlin** to the creative team.

"Surfer started getting hot as I jumped on board," said Lim. "However, when Starlin came on with his name [power] and storytelling, it just took off." Bringing back characters like **Thanos** and adding a sense of importance to a Surfer character that seemed to lack one, the magic between Starlin and Lim ushered *Silver Surfer* into the spotlight. That popularity led Lim to take over another concurrent penciling job with ***Captain America*** and then into Marvel's big crossover event in 1991, ***The Infinity Gauntlet***.

"The *Infinity* stuff was definitely a highlight for me," said Lim, who penciled the subsequent sequels *Infinity War* and *Infinity Crusade* in '92 and '93, respectively. "It gave me the chance to draw everyone in the Marvel Universe, and I remember just blanking on how to put all those characters on one spread."

Around the time of the *Infinity Crusade*, Lim left *Surfer* in 1994 with issue #91. "I got to the point where I drew most every possibility with the Surfer," said the artist. "I was pretty much burnt out on Surfer and just wanted something new and outside the space realm."

Leaving *Silver Surfer*, Lim bounced around fulfilling his dreams to draw certain Marvel characters which may have diluted his hot artist status. Jumping from ***X-Men 2099*** to ***Spider-Man Unlimited***, Lim remained a steady artist in the Marvel stables, but lost the buzz he once had on *Silver Surfer*.

"I was focused on one subject for so long and now I had this opportunity to do all that I couldn't before like *X-Men 2099*," said Lim. "This whole jumping around time kind of melts together in my head as it probably does with fans."

Lim decided it was time to branch out from Marvel as he watched many editors he worked with exit Marvel in 1995. Doing a few ***Hawkman*** covers for DC Comics, it wasn't long before Lim was offered the opportunity to return to draw Silver Surfer with the ***Superman/Silver Surfer*** crossover due out in December and he's also recently signed on to be regular penciler for DC's ***Sovereign 7*** beginning in early 1997. "It's great to get to work with the likes of Starlin in the past and now [*Sovereign 7* writer] **Chris Claremont**," said Lim. "I just like to pick up characters I like and work with writers I like too.

"I think everybody wants to be popular," concluded Lim. "But it comes and goes, and all you have to do is not think about it; keep yourself happy by doing the best work you can. That's exactly what I'm doing...enjoying myself." ■ *Matthew Senreich*

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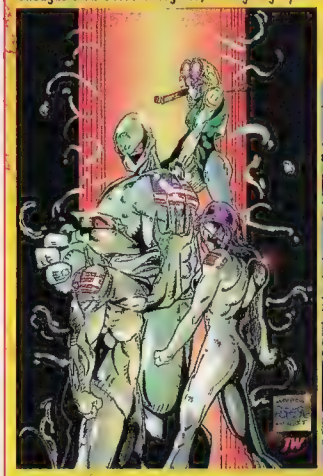

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A NEW LOOK UP IN THE SKY

SUPERMAN SPORTS SLEEK NEW COSTUME, ALTERED POWERS

SUPERMAN IS GETTING A FACELIFT.

DC Comics has announced that Superman will undergo a major transformation in 1997 with all-new powers which will manifest in February's *Adventures of Superman* #545, and an all-new costume which will debut in March's *Superman* #123.

"We thought it was time to make things a little tougher for Superman," said Joey Cavalieri, editor of the five Superman titles. "And since we've already killed him, it seemed the way to do it was to get him powers he was unfamiliar with and have him learn how to walk again."

Since the first appearance of Superman in 1938, the Man of Steel has been through numerous alterations. However, past changes were temporary. This time, the popular icon will undergo a major transformation that will contain long-lasting effects in perhaps the biggest comic book storyline since 1992's "The Death of Superman."

"Comics is a visually symbolic medium," said Louise Simonson, writer of *Superman: Man of Steel*. "When you make a big change in a character, people need to recognize that a big change has been made just by looking at that character. That's part of the reason for coming up with the idea to change the costume."

The change in Superman promises to radically alter the classic hero. "He's had his powers for 50 years worth of comic books," said David Michelinie, writer of *Action Comics*. "And Superman getting used to them as young Clark Kent in Smallville was done so long ago, that we now wanted him to learn all over again for a new generation."

THE POWERS

Superman's new powers have been confirmed as energy-based and will grow out of Superman's recent quest to re-obtain the powers he lost when the sun was blotted out during last summer's "The Final Night" storyline. Though Superman's powers are changing, Superman will still derive them from solar energy.

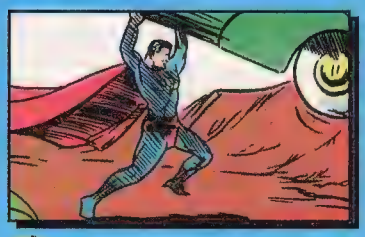
"He's becoming an energy-based creature, so instead of bullets bouncing off him, now they'll pass through him," said Cavalieri. "Through a power we're calling 'violent absorption,' for lack of a better term, the bullets will go into him, stop and fall to the ground from within him."

"With these new powers, Superman will

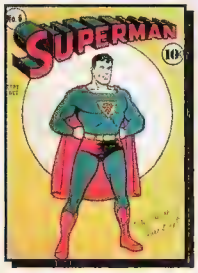
Superman gets streamlined for the '90s

STITCHES IN TIME — A visual evolution of Superman

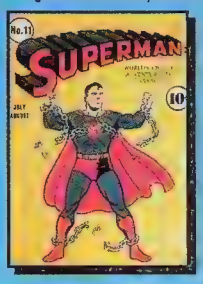
1938 The first Superman from *Action Comics* #1. Note the mostly blue costume, with red cape and yellow chest insignia. Note the lack of red boots.



1940 Lightening the costume's blue tint, Shuster adds a yellow perimeter around the chest insignia, a yellow belt around the underwear and red boots. Notice the defined "S" hair curl.



1941 Setting the standard for the next 50 years, a red perimeter is added around Superman's symbol, swimming in a sea of yellow, creating the traditional Superman costume.



begin to lose the ability to control his powers and even to maintain a physical form," said Dan Jurgens, writer of *Superman*. "Because of that, he's going to need a containment suit which will be put together through a collection of several different and rather unique resources."

Superman's new energy form will make life difficult for his alter ego Clark Kent. Existing basically as energy, Superman will have to concentrate to change into the physical form of Clark Kent, and it will take an enormous force of will to switch back and forth.

"When Superman becomes Clark Kent, he will be in a solid form," said Michelinie. "He is strictly a human being with no powers and will now be vulnerable in that form."

"He's used to always having powers," added Simonson. "So when he now stubs his toe as Clark, it's going to hurt."

THE HISTORY

The new storyline has been building since *Superman* #116 in which Superman was almost sucked into the bottled city of Kandor, after a creature named Tolos used magic to shrink and imprison Kandor in the bottle. In *Superman* #116, Tolos attempted to capture Superman and imprison him in Kandor. According to Jurgens, Tolos' failed plans somehow connect to Superman's power changes. At the end of *Superman* #116, Tolos was killed and Superman vowed to free the trapped beings inside Kandor. Since *Superman* #116, Superman has been going through a slow transformation that was exemplified in *Superman* #117 by a Fortress of Solitude robot indicating that Superman's DNA didn't register as Superman's.

"Superman thought that was a malfunctioning robot," said Jurgens, who notes that this is indeed the real deal and not some Super-impostor. "This is the same Superman we all know. He's just going through a transformation that is already underway."

"The Final Night" crossover escalated the story even further by taking Superman's classic powers away.

"Since then, Superman's been trying to get his powers back any way he can, every time not succeeding," said DC Executive Editor Mike Carlin. "So the random buildup of different energies will lead to a change. All the attempts will pile up, so when he gets his powers back, the powers won't necessarily be what he had before."

"He's becoming an energy-based creature, so instead of bullets bouncing off him, now they'll pass through him."
—Joey Cavalieri, Superman Editor

THE TWISTS & THE COSTUME

"He's going to be learning how to do what his old powers did in new ways," said Cavalieri. "Instead of flying in his conventional way, he'll learn how to fly like a bolt of lightning, streaking from one place to another. And when he lands, he'll even leave a charred hole in the ground until he gets used to things. He's really learning how to walk again."

With the new look and powers, Superman will no longer contain some of his old, classic powers such as X-ray vision or super-hearing. "The idea is he'll no longer hear someone yelling for help down the street, let alone across town. So this is where he goes, 'I never realized how important my super-hearing was to me,' " said Karl Kesel, writer of *Adventures of Superman*.

In the process of Superman's transformation, the new outfit will develop from a need to contain these unfamiliar powers. The new containment costume will be derived from four sources: Professor Hamilton, a Kryptonian robot in the Fortress of Solitude, Kitty Faulkner at S.T.A.R. Labs and an unlikely source at Lex Corps. "It'll be a costume of need," said Jurgens. "Not necessarily for effect."

One noticeable subtraction from the costume is the lack of the red cape or *any* red for that matter.

"The cape was basically there for regal flourish on his traditional costume, to give him an imposing physique and figure when he met the bad guy of the week," said Carlin. "He now has a lot of imposing things spewing out of his body, so he won't be needing man-made flourishes like that."

"When a guy moves at the speed of light, the cape's going to rip off anyway," said Simonson.

But is DC Comics afraid that its franchise character Superman will become unrecognizable?

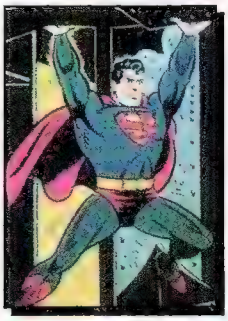
"He's still Superman," said Cavalieri. "He still has the 'S,' and it seems to me if you're going to do a story like this, you should really go all the way. It's a hell of a visual and when you see how he flies, you won't even miss the cape."

WILL IT STICK?

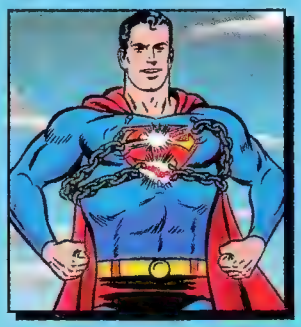
According to DC, the changes to Superman will be in effect for the foreseeable future. "We're making a deliberate attempt to change the status quo," said Jurgens. "I guess if we get a billion letters saying it sucks, we'll probably back out, but I highly doubt that's going to happen."

"So now that Superman is completely energy-based, is he still the Man of Steel?" asked Kesel. "Just a question to think about..." ■ *Matthew Senreich*

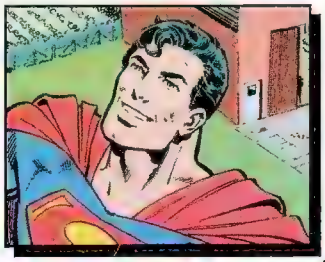
Circa 1950 Though the costume is the same, Superman begins to take shape physically, as artist Wayne Boring starts filling out the Superman body, making him more barrel-chested and rounder than the older, simpler look.



Circa 1970 Abs of steel! Again, note not a costume change but the Curt Swan "buffing up" of Superman with more detail in the stomach, legs and arms, making him truly the Man of Steel.

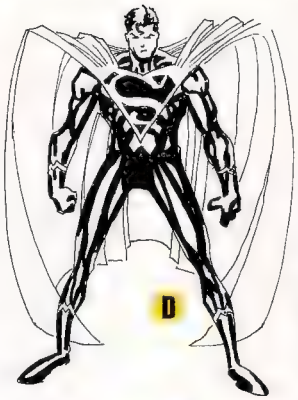


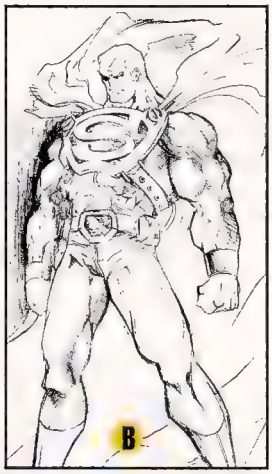
1986 When DC relaunched Superman, the company called upon the talents of superstar artist John Byrne. Using his distinct Marvel approach to storytelling, Byrne effectively "Marvelized" DC's flagship character by making him a bigger, bolder and splashier character.



HAVING A COSTUME BALL

When *Wizard* heard that Superman was changing his costume, we decided to have some fun with the notion. So we tracked down a number of comics' most dynamic artists and asked them, "'If you were presented with the opportunity to change the Man of Steel's costume, what would you do?" Here's what they had to say…and a few of them even submitted sketches along with their ideas on how they'd alter the costume.





A J. SCOTT CAMPBELL (*Gen13*) "I'm torn in two different directions. One says that it would be interesting and a real challenge, the other says that it would be sacrilegious. No offense to those who update the classic costumes—a part of me always hates the result. I'd either give a retro-fit or a slick, cutting-edge look."

B KEVIN LAU (*X-Force*) "I'd stay with the short hair and give him a cleaner look. I'd add a plate-metal Superman logo on a black body suit with a single red stripe in the middle. Also, I'd give him a belt with a memory chip inside to possibly memorize fighting skills and weaknesses of enemies, a new pair of boots and a longer cape."

C JERRY ORDWAY (former *Superman* artist) "The one thing is to lose the underpants—they have no bearing on the '90s…maybe not even for the '40s. I'd go all blue. I like the cape, especially when you're wearing skintight clothes. Bare arms, blue shirt and pants, red cape with the "S" and boots. I'd add yellow inside the insignia, wrist bands, belt, bands on biceps, cuff and on boots."

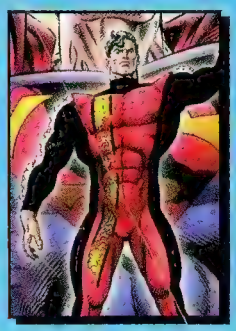
D JOE QUESADA (*Ash*) "The one thing I'd have to keep is the cape. It's a great element when drawing motion. Simple and sleek, with no goofy underwear, belt or red support hose. Just plain old black leather with a blue sheen. Give him a big Jack Kirby-like cape…he should look like a God."

ANDY KUBERT (*Wolverine*) "If it were me, I would try to keep it as simple as possible. I wouldn't put a lot of crap on him like shoulder pads or knee pads. I would keep it simple and not radically change it."

JOHN ROMITA SR. (former Marvel Art Director) "If I had the assignment, I'd probably go [very simple]…no tights, boots, cloak or the big red "S"! This would leave a design very much like what Jack Kirby has shown us…the Silver Surfer (a superbeing from the cosmos!). "

■ *Matthew Senreich*

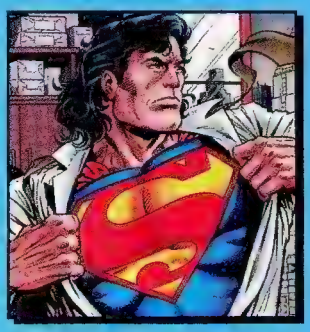
1989 When the Eradicator, a Kryptonian object with artificial intelligence, took over Superman's mind, Superman altered his costume to reflect garb worn on his native Krypton (minus the cape, of course).



1993 Upon returning from the dead, Superman briefly found himself in a black regeneration suit with a silver "S" stitched on the front, silver wrist guards and silver toe guards. Note the long hair, which brings us to…

1993 After defeating the Cyborg Superman and Mongul, Superman shed the black costume for the traditional suit. His long hair remained until his wedding day last October.

■ *Matthew Senreich*



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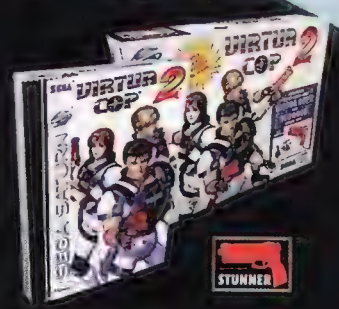

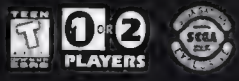

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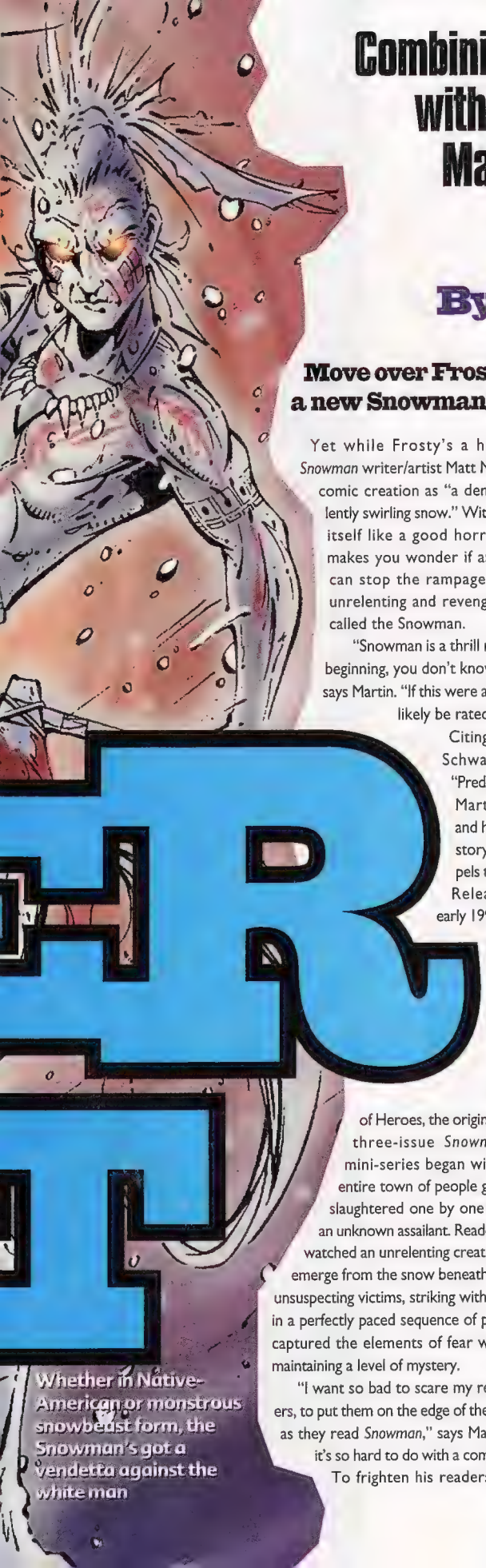
K THE
FROST

Combining Native-American folklore with your favorite horror film, Matt Martin's *Snowman* will chill you to the bone

By Matthew Senreich



Whether in Native-American or monstrous snowbeast form, the Snowman's got a vendetta against the white man

Move over Frosty, there's a new Snowman in town.

Yet while Frosty's a happy, jolly soul, *Snowman* writer/artist Matt Martin describes his comic creation as "a demonic mass of violently swirling snow." With a story that paces itself like a good horror movie, Martin makes you wonder if anyone or anything can stop the rampage of the powerful, unrelenting and revenge-driven creature called the Snowman.

"Snowman is a thrill ride. Right from the beginning, you don't know what to expect," says Martin. "If this were a film, it would most likely be rated R."

Citing the 1987 Arnold Schwarzenegger film "Predator" as an example, Martin mixes mystery and horror to produce a story that compels the reader. Released in early 1996 by Hall of Heroes, the original three-issue *Snowman* mini-series began with an entire town of people getting slaughtered one by one by an unknown assailant. Readers watched an unrelenting creature emerge from the snow beneath its unsuspecting victims, striking without warning in a perfectly paced sequence of panels that captured the elements of fear while maintaining a level of mystery.

"I want so bad to scare my readers, to put them on the edge of their seats as they read *Snowman*," says Martin. "But it's so hard to do with a comic book."

To frighten his readers, Martin sought out an area in history lined with myths and legends to better lend an aura of mystery and suspense to his tale. Stemming from an interest in the Native-American clash with the white man in the 1800s, *Snowman* creates its own Native-American legend. *Snowman* is the story of a Native-American's spirit trapped within two crystallized arrowheads. When the arrowheads come into contact with snow, the spirit is released and transformed into an immense snow-like creature with the arrowheads as its eyes.

"This story isn't totally about an Indian," says Martin. "It's about an ordinary man whose had everything taken from him. His people and family had been oppressed for years by another race."

Last October's release of the three-issue mini-series *Snowman: 1944* from Entity Comics, contained the back-up story "Snowman: Zero," revealing the true origin of the Snowman. Readers learned of the Native-American's family being massacred, his wife being raped and himself being shot at point blank range. "The Snowman is not the monster he appears to be," says Martin. "He's a man, just no longer in his human outfit." Through this powerful origin story, not only is Snowman given a strong motive for his actions but it makes readers wonder if he's justified in doing what he's doing.

"This is a topic I really don't like to approach, mainly because I have no answers for society's racial tensions," says Martin. "However, I think one of the most impacting story elements you can use is a tragedy of mankind. Conflicting races is one of these."

Plagued with a curse, the Snowman returns to the land of the living each time the crystallized arrowheads touch the snow. Since the curse's initiation over 100 years ago, the Snowman has returned numerous times to walk the Earth. With each visit, the Snowman continues to witness the atrocities committed by the white man. Starting to believe that the Earth is plagued by these vile Caucasian creatures, the Snowman undertakes the quest of violently obliterating the white man from existence.

When two adventurers stumble across the crystallized arrowheads on a necklace in a Colorado Native-American burial ground, the stage is set for the original *Snowman* mini-series to begin. As the necklace falls into the snow, it unleashes the Snowman

"If this were a film, it would most likely be rated R."
—Matt Martin

who begins a major killing spree in the town of Silver Creek. Enter Jack, a 40-year-old Caucasian Vietnam veteran. Our hero.

Scarred by memories of the war and by the death of his three-year old daughter, who fell to her death when Jack had turned his back for just a brief moment, he is a loner searching for purpose. His wife ran out on him after their daughter's death, leaving Jack to wallow in his own misery. Yet when the Snowman begins his rampage, Jack risks life and limb to save his fellow town mates.

"I love Jack," says Martin. "He's so bitter about everything that's happened to him in life and yet still has a heart for people, though he can't show it very well."

In the mayhem caused by the Snowman, Jack meets Gwynn, an attractive young woman who may hold the key to defeating this monstrosity. "Gwynn first appears to be a little air headed, but she's actually a very intelligent person," Martin reveals. "She's really attracted to Jack, but he doesn't share those feelings—at least he doesn't show it, and that's what makes her *more* interested in Jack."

Bringing the story full circle, Gwynn resembles the Snowman's wife. And Jack...well, "unfortunately, he looks like the guy who raped and killed the Snowman's wife," says Martin. How Jack and Gwynn attempt to stop the Snowman's vicious quest is the premise of the original mini-series. "*Snowman* is supposed to be in a more realistic world than that of superheroes. It's a legend, and most people would laugh it off.

"The idea of Snowman came late one night in January when I was taking my cousin Cam home. It was snowing pretty heavily," says the creator. "Out of the blue, Cam says to me, 'Wouldn't it be cool if the snow came to life, picked up this car, flipped it over and then slammed it back down on its top?' I paused and looked at him, then said, 'Yeah...that would be *cool*.' "

With this inspiration, Hall of Heroes and Martin published the three-issue black-and-white *Snowman* mini-series. The response was incredible and a buzz formed around the book almost immediately. *Snowman* was getting noticed and Martin began to think long term about the direction of his comic book career. So he left Hall of Heroes and took his creation to Entity Comics.

Snowman: 1944, a three-issue, bimonthly mini-series that began in October, brings the Snowman to Europe during the second World War, where he takes his anger out on the Nazis. "The new main character is named Tommy Gunston, an American fighter pilot shot down near the Belgium/Germany border," says Martin. "He's trying to find a way off the war front with the Snowman right behind him. Not far behind [them] is the American army, discovering dead Germans the Snowman left in his wake. This series will be a bit creepier than the first one."

Martin has always loved World War II history, and *Snowman: 1944* is allowing him to incorporate actual World War II history into his own legend and creation. "Cam and I wanted to explore the Snowman's past and the many times throughout history that he's been resurrected," he says. "The Snowman curse [began] in the 1800s sometime, so from then until now, there have been many sightings of the beast. I want to explore that a bit before continuing with Jack and Gwynn."

"I want so bad to scare readers, to put them on the edge of their seats."
—Matt Martin

As for the future of *Snowman*, Martin is taking it as it comes. One thing he'd like to add to his *Snowman* series is color. "Most of my readers tell me they don't mind the absence of color because the art and story content is usually good," he says. "That makes me feel content with this current format for the book, but color would be nice." And if the book continues to be successful, Martin admits that color will be added.

Martin will finish off *Snowman: 1944* in February, and then hopefully return to the beginning. "I love Jack," he says. "So if *Snowman* is still doing well, I really want to get back to Jack and Gwynn, the original Snowman characters."

Already thinking about a third *Snowman* mini-series, Martin is very set on creating his own folklore or legend. "I hope to continue building the history of the Snowman and have a huge timeline constructed of his appearances," Martin says. "Eventually, I want to have a whole cast of characters, but Jack and Gwynn will always be the ones that started it all. I miss them and will have to get back to them sometime soon." W

On a dare, staffer Matthew Senreich once tasted yellow snow. The scary thing is, he liked it.

Tip of the Iceberg

"I grew up wanting to be a fighter pilot," says Matt Martin about his dream in life.

The 21-year-old creator of *Snowman* has had a fascination for World War II fighter planes since he was a kid. "It wasn't until middle school that I started getting into comics," he says. "To this day, my love for vintage war birds is far greater than my love for comics."

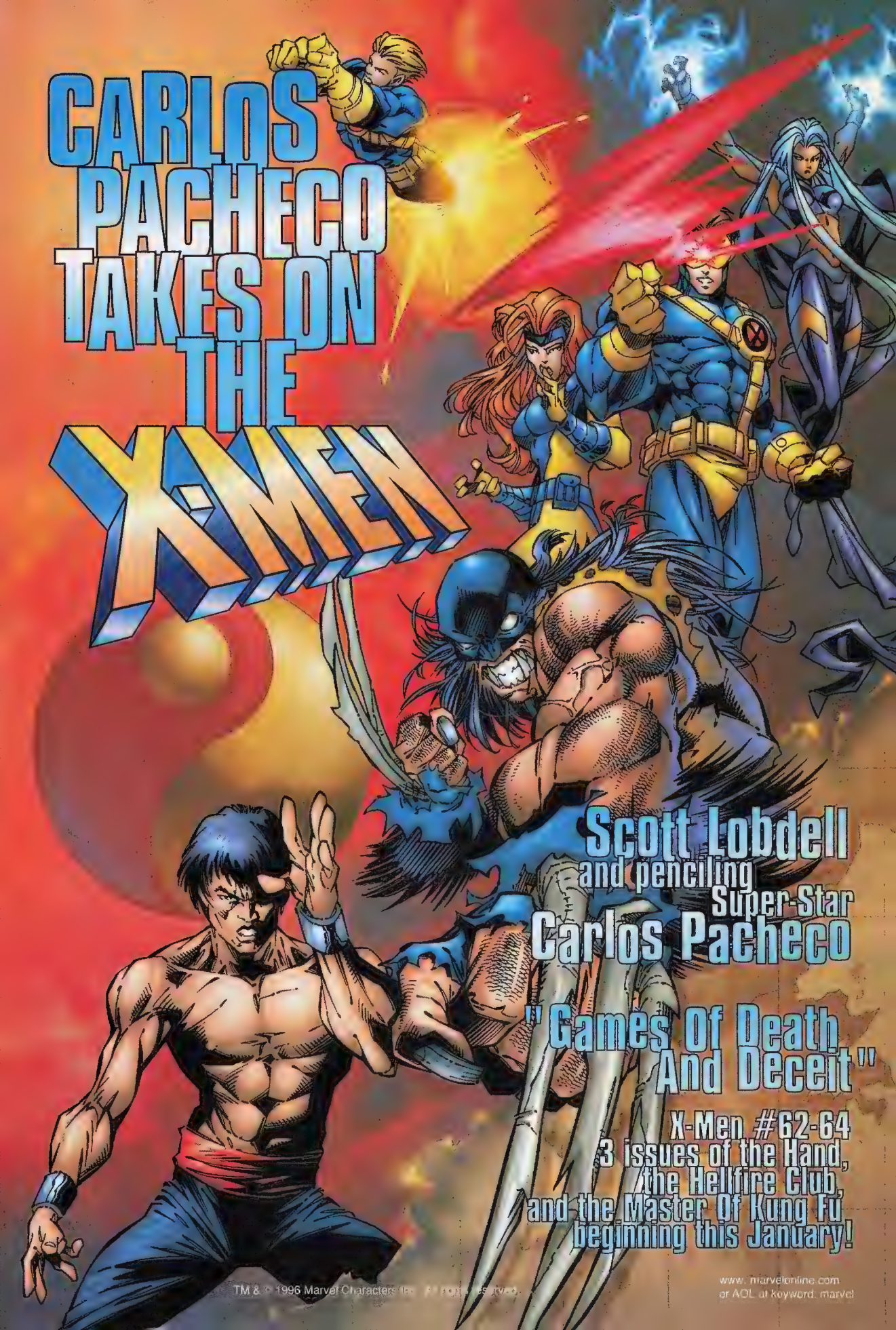
Martin is currently living out his childhood fantasies with *Snowman: 1944*, a three-issue mini-series from Entity Comics, that mixes his passion for World War II history with his love of comic books. "I actually go into my studio and draw planes like never before," he says. "I couldn't be happier!"

Growing up, Martin would spend all day in school doodling airplanes, fighter pilots and whatever else he felt like. "Then I'd come home, grab a snack and head for the drawing board. It's all I wanted to do."

And his doodling paid off when Allen Stewart, owner of the small, creator-owned company Hall of Heroes, approached Martin about joining his company in 1995. Stewart had discovered Martin's Spawn artwork in the fan-art section of *Wizard* #14.

Now with a *Snowman* mini-series behind him, another one underway at Entity and three major motion picture companies bidding for the rights to the Snowman character, Martin couldn't be happier. "I like doing comics and I don't know if I'll ever want to do anything else," he says. "Hopefully in the future, I'll be flying my own vintage fighter plane, but that's a BIG dream." ■*Matthew Senreich*

The Snowman takes on Nazis in *Snowman: 1944*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STEALING THUNDER

Marvel's rookie superteam, the Thunderbolts, attempts to fill the shoes of the Avengers and Fantastic Four

They appeared out of nowhere in November to battle the Hulk, trying to prove that they could protect the defenseless citizens of the Marvel Universe. But just who the heck are these guys who call themselves the Thunderbolts?

"They want to fill the role vacated by the Avengers and the Fantastic Four," explains writer Kurt Busiek, who in February will unveil *Thunderbolts*, the team's double-sized first issue with former *Amazing Spider-Man* penciler Mark Bagley. "They don't know if they can, but they're going to do their best."

Adds editor Tom Brevoort, "These guys aren't going to be second-rate Avengers. I look at them as filling the same role the new Avengers did when Captain America reformed the team with Hawkeye, the Scarlet Witch and Quicksilver [in *Avengers* #16]. They very actively want to be the daytime good guys in the new Marvel Universe, and they will be embraced by the public because of that. They have big shoes to fill, and they're going to do their best to fill them."

Their rookie status may not give them immediate star power with readers, but it certainly gives the creators leeway to cut loose, says Bagley. "There's no preconceived notion of who these guys are,

and they don't cross over into four other books. We can pretty much do what we want with them and have some fun."

One thing the creators plan to do is examine how sudden fame and mass media attention affect teammates not used to the glare. "This is a bunch of disparate people with different reasons for signing up," Busiek explains. "They've just been thrust into the spotlight, and the fame and public approval they receive will have a strong psychological effect on them."

The team's leader is Citizen V (pronounced "Citizen Vee," not "Citizen Five"), a master strategist, as well as an expert swordsman and hand-to-hand fighter. He explains his name as a tribute to his grandfather, the original Citizen V, who was killed by Baron Zemo in the waning days of World War II. And you just know with a mad historian and comics geek like Busiek behind this project, there really *was* a Citizen V. He debuted in *Daring Mystery Comics* #8 in 1942 and sported a costume that may have inspired the term "fashion nightmare." "I always thought it was a great-sounding name," Busiek admits. "It's got zing, it's got zip, it's not like any other superhero name. And I like the idea that a character with a Golden Age name is leading the team."

"Kurt is a font of useless comic book knowledge," notes Bagley. "I just draw the thing. He sent me a rough sketch of what he was thinking for [Citizen V's] costume, and I was glad he sent it. Every artist has a lexicon of costume ideas, and sometimes you get locked into one mode. It's nice to get a fresh perspective. And his idea was *fairly* cool. I just tweaked it out a bit and added some stylized things." Citizen V is Bagley's favorite to draw, the artist admits. "That costume makes a really big statement, and he gets the real money shots," he says. "He stands around looking like a bad-ass, so he's the most fun to do."

Citizen V agonized for quite a while over what to call his new team, the team leader told the world in a press conference. "He thought taking the Avengers name would be arrogant," Busiek says. "They want to fill that role, but they won't presume that they can." Adds Brevoort, "They aren't actively looking to replace the Avengers, they're just here to do their best to get the job done and provide a comforting, protective presence."

In *real* life, finding a name was a tough task too. "We wanted something that sounded powerful, righteous and violent, but not aggressive," Busiek explains. "These guys don't go out looking to hit

people, they defend people." But the name "Defenders" was judged too retro, he notes. "We didn't want the book to come across as a revival of a former group."

With his group's name picked, Citizen V set out to recruit teammates. "These are people who have never been costumed heroes before but had the supertalents to become them," Busiek explains. "Citizen V explains that he didn't want to get existing heroes to join the group, because that wouldn't change the balance of power. He wanted to convince new people to join the battle."

To that end, he signs up five heroes, including his second in command, Meteorite. She's in many ways the one who holds everything together, Busiek says. "If Citizen V is the brains of the team, then Meteorite is its heart." While their leader focuses on outwardly drawn problems, Meteorite concerns herself with her teammates' worries and keeping everyone on an even keel.

Her powers derive from her ability to channel an extraterrestrial energy that lets her fly, gives her some superstrength and allows her to focus blasts propelled from her hands. She also wears armor to enhance her natural level of endurance while she's flying, "not unlike the meteorite from which she takes her name," Busiek explains.

Adds Bagley, "She's in the very top echelon, power-wise, and she has a lot of aggressive capabilities that emanate from inside her. I wanted her visual appearance to show that she's a martial-type character. She's a fighter, and her armor reflects that." She's also fun to draw, he admits. "She's a babe."

Atlas, much as his name implies, is a giant of a man. To grow larger, he uses a similar biochemical technology as the one developed by Henry Pym, a.k.a. Giant Man. "Not much is known about his past," Busiek says, "but he's possibly the most-dedicated Thunderbolt. He sees this very much as a chance he's been given to do an important mission, and he's not going to fail. He's very responsible, and he's the most cognizant of the job that they've been handed. It weighs on him, but his shoulders are broad enough to handle it."

"Kurt loves giants and so do I," says Bagley. "I've never had the chance to draw one regularly, so I pulled out all the old costumes for Goliath and Giant-Man as inspiration. I'm not a big fan of huge chest emblems, but for him we used a nice, stylized 'A' because Kurt suggested an approach that worked. It's good stuff. I'm enjoying drawing him."

Joining these three is Techno, who uses his mechanical and cybernetic genius not only to fight crime but to aid several teammates in harnessing their talents. "He's what MacGyver would be if the real world had Jack Kirby-drawn technology," Busiek summarizes. Techno cybernetically controls a backpack full of electronic gadgets, reassembling them into different components as the situation calls for them. "He's the team engineer and mechanical genius."

He's also a daring swashbuckler who spent his life adventuring in areas of the mind, Busiek explains. "Now he's got the chance to be a daring adventurer in the real world. He's not wasting any time wondering at his good fortune—he's living it up. He wants all the adulation, all the fame, all the women he can get before the ride's over. But his newfound recklessness and bravado can sometimes go too far."

From a design standpoint, "the toughest part about Techno was that Kurt wanted him to have a pencil-thin mustache, to emphasize his swashbuckling personality," notes Bagley. "But that made him look like Forge or Tony Stark. So I added a goatee and a different haircut. The rest is going to be cool. I'm sure we'll come up with lots of fun gadgets for him to use."

Techno's got some grateful teammates, thanks to his efforts to harness their powers. One of those is Songbird, a woman whose vocal chords were severely damaged and have since been rebuilt by Techno. Now she can channel those hyped vocal abilities to create aural structures like wings, prisons and projectiles. "She doesn't have enough control to create a boxing glove," Busiek notes, shooting down the hopes of Green Lantern fans worldwide. "But she can transmute sound into many shapes."

Her look is inspired by Kate Moss, Bagley says. "Kurt wanted a fragile, waif-like look [to contrast with the powerful Meteorite], so I accentuated that. But he also wanted to add some mechanical apparatus to modulate her innate vocal abilities. I played around with some shapes and created a kind of 1950s grillwork for her shoulders. It's pretty sharp, and her wings are fairly cool too."

Although powerful, Songbird has a fragile personality, having escaped an abusive home as a child, says Busiek. "Her new powers give her a chance to help the world and hopefully reclaim some of the inner strength that's been as damaged as her body."

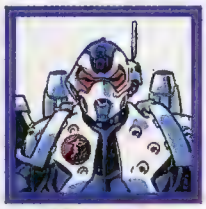
CITIZEN V

SONGBIRD

ATLAS

TECHNO

METEORITE


MACH 1

Techno also came to the aid of Mobile Armored Cybernetic Harness (M.A.C.H.) 1, an experienced fighter pilot who works with his genius teammate to create a skin-tight suit that gives him many of the attributes of a fighter jet. "He can fly at great speed, fire heat-seeking missiles, use sophisticated scanning technology and do other cool stuff," Busiek says. "He's cutting edge for the first time in his life, and he's amazed by it all."

Busiek wanted him in an Iron Man-like suit, Bagley says. "He's the only one where I had to do a number of character sketches," he admits. "The rest fell into place pretty well, but I got it into my head to try an insect motif with M.A.C.H. 1. My first design was too clunky and insect-like, but I thought it was cool and figured I'd give it a shot. I modified that for a second try and finally made him a lot sleeker, with a jet fighter's helmet. He's also got these weird studs on his arms. Don't ask me what they do, they just look cool."

M.A.C.H. 1's military experience makes him more than willing to put himself in harm's way to protect citizens, Busiek notes. "His approach to being on the team is that someone has to stand on guard to guarantee our freedoms and our lives, and he's willing to be that guy." He's also willing to serve as protector to Songbird's fragile ego, which leads to the two bonding romantically.

The team's public acceptance affects M.A.C.H. 1 deeply, Busiek adds. "He can't get over the fact that, Sally Field-like people like him—they *really* like him. He doesn't want to give this up for a second." And, of course, there's no reason he'll have to—is there? "M.A.C.H. 1 has a past," the writer hints. "And it's going to come back to bite him."

The creators admit there are a few curves on the way, but they won't reveal just what. "Naturally, with a group of new heroes like this, you would expect there to be some secrets and surprises as we get to know them," Busiek says. "And we're certainly going to have those." A key shocker will be revealed by the end of the first issue, he adds.

With the team's divergent personalities, it's apparent that part of the fun will be watching these characters interact, especially as their fame grows. "We're going to explore the media and public's reaction and eventual acceptance of them as heroes," Busiek says. "There's going to be a great deal of internal friction. It's going to become Meteorite's job to handle that, and the other four will have to endure it. That may lead some to go over the edge."

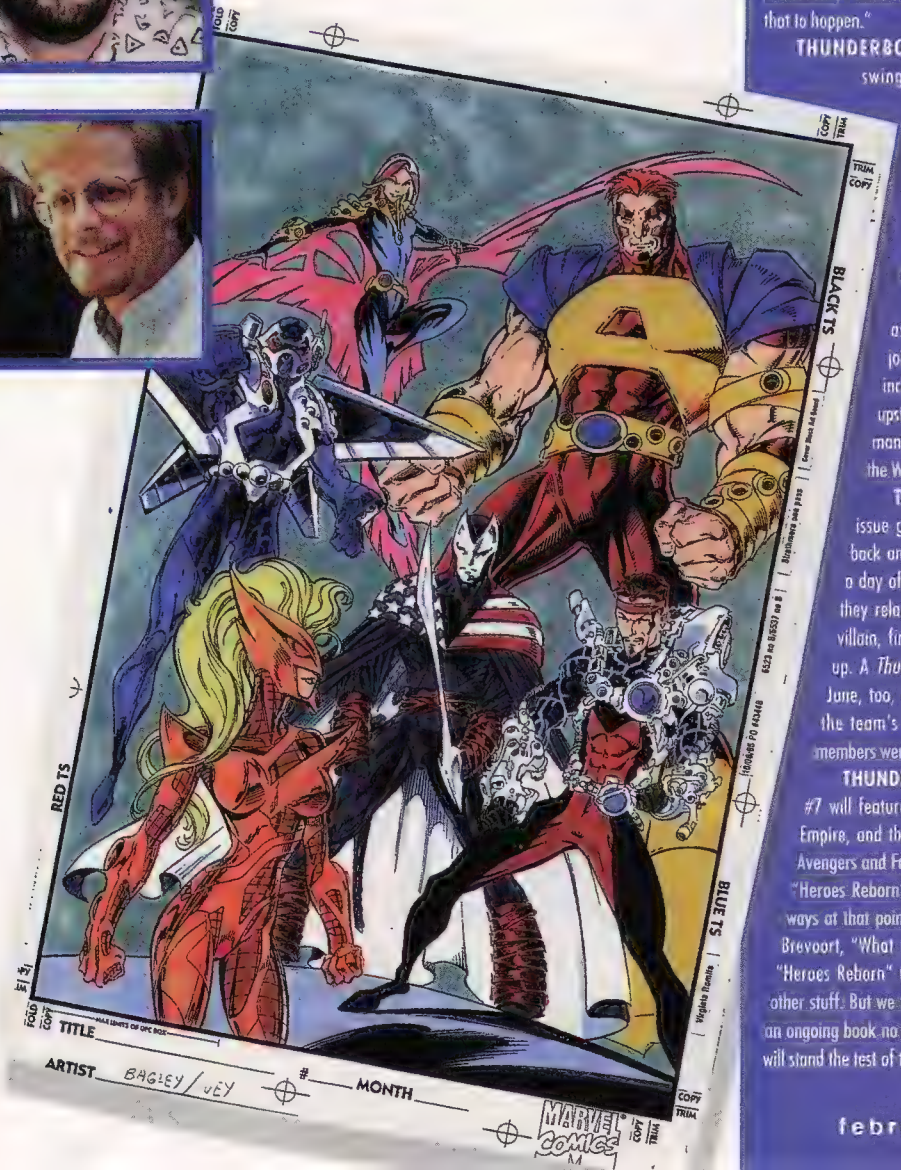
For inspiration, Busiek is looking to the classics: the first 150 issues of *The Avengers* and the first 60 issues of the new X-Men (after *Uncanny X-Men* #94). "I want to combine the grandeur of those Avengers stories with the character texture from those days with the X-Men, and add the twist that I provide to a story, whatever that is."

What that twist is, he agrees, is a different perspective than readers often get from superhero books. "What I'm bringing to this, I think, is an awareness of the broader Marvel Universe and how these characters will interact with society. This story will not just be about their adventures, but what it's like to be on the varsity."

Busiek will be finding that out for himself, never having worked on a high-profile mainstream Marvel book before. "What's appealing to me is that I'm doing something smack in the middle of the Marvel Universe with a terrific mainstream artist," he says. "I have a good reputation for dealing with Marvel characters, but I've never done anything like this before." **W**

Craig Shutt, who also wrote about titans tussling this month, is trying hard to join the varsity too.

Lightning *does* strike twice as top talent Busiek (above) and Bagley conspire to create Marvel's new superteam



AFTERGLOW

WHERE WILL THE THUNDERBOLTS STRIKE NEXT?

THUNDERBOLTS #1—The team's February first issue—which takes place before the Thunderbolts' earlier *Hulk* and *Marvel Universe* one-shot appearances—features a run-in with the Rat Pack, an old group of Avengers villains, that's looting neighborhoods ruined by Onslaught. The double-sized issue also has room for the team to take on a new, improved Wrecking Crew at the Statue of Liberty. "Their battles are very splashy and very public, so all of New York sees them," *Thunderbolts* writer Kurt Busiek says.

THUNDERBOLTS #2—The Mad Thinker and his all-new Awesome Androids kidnap Franklin Richards at a ceremony for a heroes' memorial at Four Freedoms Plaza. The Thinker figures that Franklin has many of Reed Richards' secrets embedded in his subconscious from having watched those experiments as a child, and he wants them. "But the Thunderbolts are around," Busiek reminds us. "And they *don't* want that to happen."

THUNDERBOLTS #3—The Black Widow swings by to check out the group, explaining that she intends to track down every old Avenger villain and avenge the team's "death." "This issue will explore the group's status as replacement heroes and give us the Widow's view," he says.

THUNDERBOLTS #4—An as-yet-unrevealed new member joins the team in this issue, which includes a big battle at Dr. Doom's upstate castle. It also reveals who was manipulating both the Rat Pack and the Wrecking Crew in the first issue.

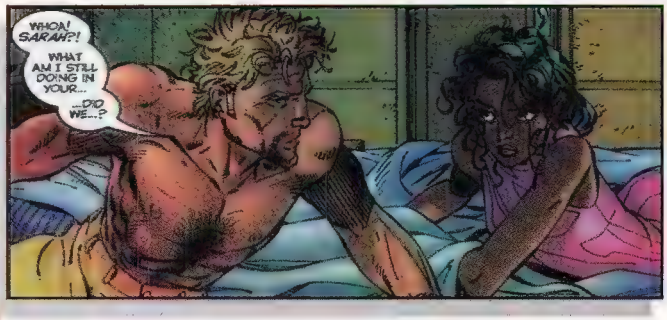
THUNDERBOLTS #5—This issue gives the team a chance to kick back and get to know each other during a day off touring New York City. At least, they relax until the Growing Man [an old villain, first seen in *Avengers* #69] shows up. A *Thunderbolts Annual* is planned for June, too, which will delve more fully into the team's background, showing how the members were recruited.

THUNDERBOLTS #6-#8—Issues #6-#7 will feature a battle against the New Kree Empire, and then comes #8, at which time the Avengers and Fantastic Four may return from the "Heroes Reborn" Universe. "We can go a lot of ways at that point," Busiek says. Adds editor Tom Brevoort, "What we do depends on sales for the "Heroes Reborn" titles, our own sales and lots of other stuff. But we *are* committed to *Thunderbolts* as an ongoing book no matter what happens. We hope it will stand the test of time." CS

The Young & THE RESTLESS

WildStorm's Gen[13] is full of hot babes, crude jokes and reckless teens, and fans wouldn't have it any other way

By Matthew Brady



"On a high-concept level, we wanted *Gen[13]* to be Beavis and Butt-Head meet The New Mutants," Gen[13] co-creator Jim Lee remembers, laughing. "There was way too much grim and gritty stuff out there, and we wanted to put together something different. Something sexier, sleeker and with a good dose of adolescent irreverence."

For those of you coming in late, *Gen[13]*, aside from being one of today's hottest comics, is about five superpowered teenagers fightin' the good fight and just being…well…teenagers. There's Caitlin Fairchild, the group's unofficial leader, who's super-strong and super-smart; Bobby (Burnout) Lane, a fairly quiet kid who can project fire blasts and fly; Roxy (Freefall) Spaulding, who can alter the pull of gravity on herself and others; Sarah Rainmaker, a Native American beauty who can control the forces of weather; and Eddie (Grunge) Chang, a party boy who can assimilate the properties of anything he touches. The five were part

Fairchild gets "jungle fever" (left), while Burnout wonders what he and Rainmaker were up to the night before (above)

of a super-soldier development program called Project Genesis, run by a highly secret intelligence organization known as International Operations (I/O). Realizing that I/O saw them only as guinea pigs for cruel research, the kids organized an escape and went on the run, with the help of renegade I/O leader John Lynch, who now serves as the group's mentor.

The book has generated buzz not only because of its quick-witted writing and clean, good-girl art, but also because of its uncompromising look at the irreverence of teenage life. The kids idolize Trent Reznor, skateboard, know all the latest slang and are even into body piercing.

Naturally, *Gen*[13] struck a chord with readers from the get-go.

"I was surprised by the extent of the book's success," co-creator and series penciler J. Scott Campbell says. "I always had faith in the book, and knew that there was a niche to be filled, but the runaway success was something I didn't count on at first."

What makes *Gen*[13] so popular? Co-creator and writer Brandon Choi feels that it all boils down to the characters. "Our creative approach to it," he says, "is that while the characters do have superpowers, they are still, personality-wise, your average kids."

"We wanted to portray teenagers in comics, have fun with it, and be a little more lighthearted," adds Campbell (whose J. stands for Jeff). "There definitely was a niche to be filled, and the proof of that is the number of copycat books that came out after we started. We focus heavily on the personalities of the characters, which is something most books don't do these days."

Lee, however, isn't so quick to credit the characters. "As with any book, it comes down to the creative team," he says. "While I do have a healthy respect for the value of a character, no character in the world is appealing without a good creative team. When you boil it down, it all comes down to Brandon and Jeff. They're extremely committed to the characters."

And fans are just loving these characters, most likely because they aren't just miniature adult heroes. They like rock music, talk about "scoring" and view everything through irreverent eyes. Maintaining the "teen feel" of the characters is something, Choi admits, that isn't always the easiest thing in the world to pull off. "Giving the book a teen style is a very hard balancing act that I sometimes wonder if we can keep up with. To a certain extent, we get our information and feedback from the kids when they send in letters, and that gives us a good feel for what they're into. For the most part, though, Jeff, Jim and I are still able to watch MTV and appreciate the perspective of 'Beavis and Butt-Head,' so we're still able to tap that younger culture."

Something that the book hasn't shied away from is controversy. During its short run, *Gen*[13] has shown one of its major characters (Sarah Rainmaker) to be either bisexual or gay, Fairchild has developed a crush on the team's elder mentor Lynch, Grunge is hopelessly fascinated by the rude noises his body can make, and the book is peppered with what its critics call gratuitous T&A.

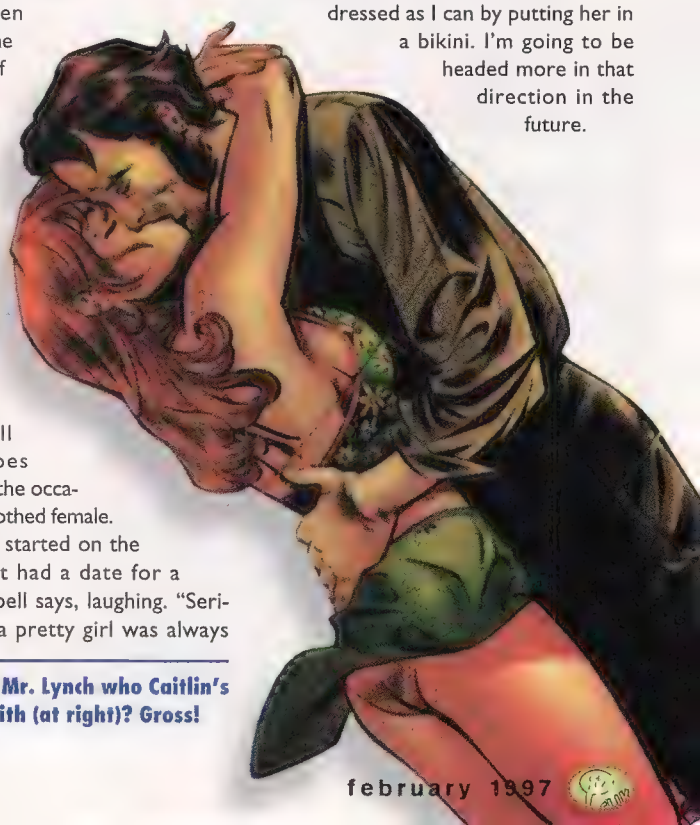
With every new controversial scene, both positive and negative mail pours into the offices. The biggest attention-getter so far, though, has been the revelation of Rainmaker's sexual orientation.

"We got a balanced cross-section between those who liked it, and those who hated it," Choi says. "Both were pretty vehement in their stance, but for the most part, it seemed that the people who were against it haven't turned away from the book. I see that as a good sign. Even if they dislike the whole notion of homosexuality, at least they're willing to read a comic that has a character who may be bisexual or homosexual."

As for the art, Campbell admits he does enjoy drawing the occasional barely clothed female. "At the time I started on the book, I hadn't had a date for a while," Campbell says, laughing. "Seriously, seeing a pretty girl was always something I enjoyed in comics, and that's what I enjoy drawing. The sexy stuff is an element of the book that sort of gives it its reputation, and I won't deny that it does help sell the book."

Campbell, who just got married this past summer, admits that he plans on toning down the sometimes risqué nature of the pencils. "When I first got into the business, I thought that more was better," he says. "Now I'm realizing that less is more. I can get the same effect with Fairchild by giving her a really cute expression while she's fully dressed as I can by putting her in a bikini. I'm going to be headed more in that direction in the future."

The panel you never saw! Rainmaker plants a wet one on Daphne! (From *Gen*[13] #5, page 20)



Whoa! Is that Mr. Lynch who Caitlin's making out with (at right)? Gross!

JAW DROPPERS

As a monthly title, *Gen*[13] doesn't shy away from shocking its readers. So for your amusement, *Wizard* proudly presents the 10 most controversial moments from *Gen*[13]:

10. *Gen*[13] #4, pp. 20-21 Caitlin in her "Jungle Girl" outfit. Hey, can we call *Gen*[13] "Playboy Jr."?

9. *Gen*[13]: *Ordinary Heroes* #1, p. 14 Grunge's obsession with the more disgusting noises his body can make.

8. *Gen*[13] #4, p. 20 Freefall takes a poke down Grunge's loincloth, without asking him to look to the left and cough!

7. *Gen*[13] #1, pp. 8-9 Rainmaker walking around butt nekkid. C'mon! In a house with a couple of hormone-laden guys, this probably ain't the wisest thing to do.

6. *Gen*[13] #4, pp. 5-6 Grunge and a LOT of naked women in a bed. 'Nuff said.

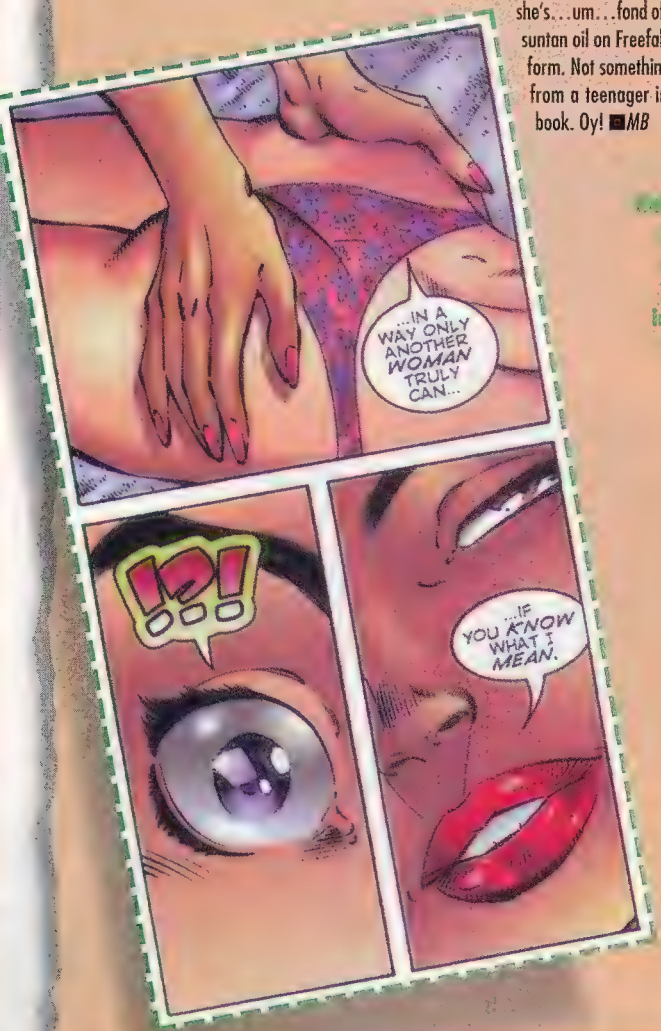
5. *Gen*[13] #4, p. 1 Freefall admits she's "Riding the crimson wave." Ugh. Way, way, waaay too much information, thank you very much.

4. *Gen*[13] #12, p. 25 Caitlin's fantasies about Lynch. Okay, this one's icky, seein' as how he's as old as her father.

3. *Gen*[13] #13B, p. 21 Grunge, in his own little comic-induced fantasy, enters the realm of Image. There he finds that some guys who look amazingly like Rob Liefeld creations have been evicted. Talk about rubbing it in!

2. *Gen*[13] #8, pp. 11-12 Sarah (who's supposedly quite fond of women; see below) puts the MAJOR moves on Bobby.

1. *Gen*[13] #2, p. 11 Rainmaker admitting that she's...um...fond of women, while she rubs suntan oil on Freefall, and admires Caitlin's form. Not something you'd expect to hear from a teenager in a mainstream comic book. Oy! ■*MB*



Rainmaker applies suntan lotion to Freefall...along with a bit more information than Freefall wanted to know

"The funny thing is, I figured we would've caught a little more flak since we do push the envelope a little bit," continues Campbell. "As far as the average sexy shots of the girls, we don't get as much negative mail as you'd think. Surprisingly enough, we get a lot of positive mail from our female readers. They really like the fact that the team is led by a pretty girl, and she's the smartest one, the tallest one, and she often rescues the males of the group."

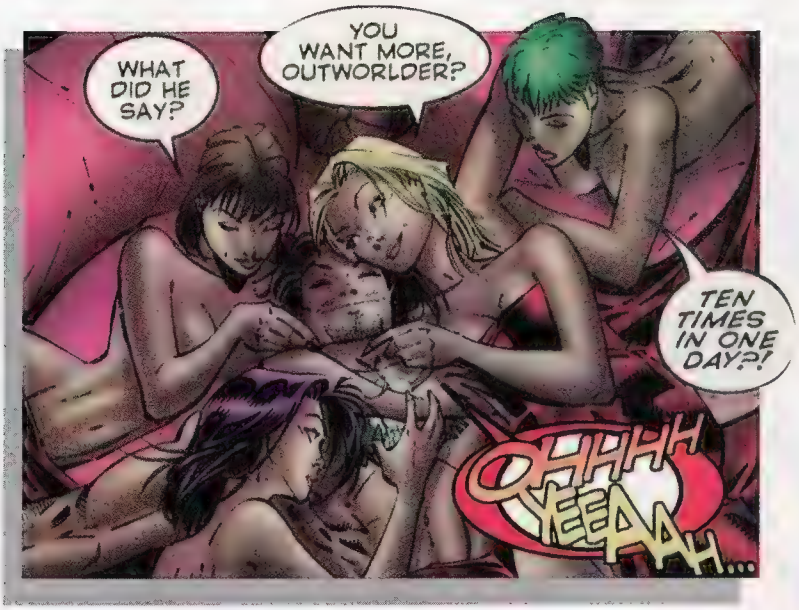
Choi admits that anything even slightly controversial has to get approval from the three creators first. "In the end, it comes down to Jeff, Jim and me sitting around and taking a vote to see what we'll let pass," Choi says. "Personally, I wouldn't put anything in a comic book that I wouldn't be willing to see on television during prime-time. If it can pass that muster for me, I don't really have any problem with it."

"We don't have a Comics Code seal on the cover," adds Lee, "and I think we finally realized that we didn't have anything holding us back except our own taste—good or bad—and fear of public reprisal from those concerned parents' groups. We've had things that we've redrawn or re-written because we felt that they were too heavy-handed, but at least for me, when I was an adolescent, flatulence jokes were really funny."

Campbell still has strong feelings about one such redrawn panel. "It was a scene from the end of issue #5," recalls the artist. "Rainmaker made a friend in a character named Daphne. We were kind of alluding to there being something more than a friendship starting, and we did a panel where they actually kissed on the lips. We kept it tactful, even though it was two women kissing, and we didn't play it up for the sensational angle. We thought it was where we were going with the plotline. [WildStorm's marketing department strongly suggested] we change it, so I redrew the panel with Rainmaker kissing Daphne goodbye on the forehead.

"It really bugs me to this day that that panel didn't get into the book. I mean, people can get away with heads chopped off and blood squirting all over the wall in other books. I had a panel with two women kissing in it, and it was deemed to be too offensive for the kids that would be buying the book. In the end, I think we were too restrained for our own good."

Now that the ongoing series is well into its second year, are things going to settle into a more comfortable rut? Don't count on it.



Grunge collects on those superhero fringe benefits

The kids will be attending the University of California at San Diego, but they won't have time to get very comfortable in their dorm rooms. "The Keepers from I/O are going to be showing up again," Choi says. "They're still trying to track down the kids, so the kids and Lynch will be forced to go on the run. This will take them along the lines of high-adventure, "Indiana Jones"-type stories, so much so that they'll run into dinosaurs. After that, the kids will be heading off into space. Yeah, the pace is going to start picking up next year."

Not-so-subtle satire from *Gen*[13] #13B, as not even former Image co-founder Rob Liefeld is safe

"This year, they're not going to be as settled as they are now," adds Campbell. "Starting with #16, they really get on this roller coaster that will pretty much take up the next year's worth of stories. We see things wrapping up sometime late next year, when we get the Batman/Gen[13] project that has been unfortunately postponed from December of 1996 until [1997]."

As for the romance of the month club that the kids seem to be in, expect it to stick around. "We're not going to drop any of the soap-opera elements," Campbell adds. "We like them a lot, and plan to keep them interesting for the next year. Bobby and Sarah, Roxy and Grunge, Fairchild and...well, whoever she ends up with, you'll just have to wait and see."

Choi also reveals that a mini-series is in the works that will link the final *Team 7* mini-series to the original *Gen*[13] mini, and fans will finally learn what role Lynch played with the members of Gen[12]—the parents of Gen[13]—and why he feels a sense of responsibility to the kids.

As for the distant future, Lee sees some big possibilities. "We have the video game, the animated movie and the new series *Gen*[13] *Bootleg* [see sidebar] starting up. *Gen*[13] has huge potential. It's got a very strong core concept that makes it appealing, and it's something that is universal. That will keep it around for years and years."

And you better believe *Gen*[13] will be pushing the envelope and taking chances with both story and art. "The book will continue to be sexy and racy," Choi says before switching to a mock-pompous tone. "But we won't stoop to gratuitous violence like decapitations and lots of blood. We do have to have some standards, after all."

Matthew Brady, who wrote the Peter David Q&A in this issue, feels he has what it takes to be a member of Gen[13]*. Flatulence jokes are really funny to him too. (Look in this issue's "Trailer Park" for the scoop on the "Gen*[13]*" live-action film.)*

OFF TO BOOT CAMP

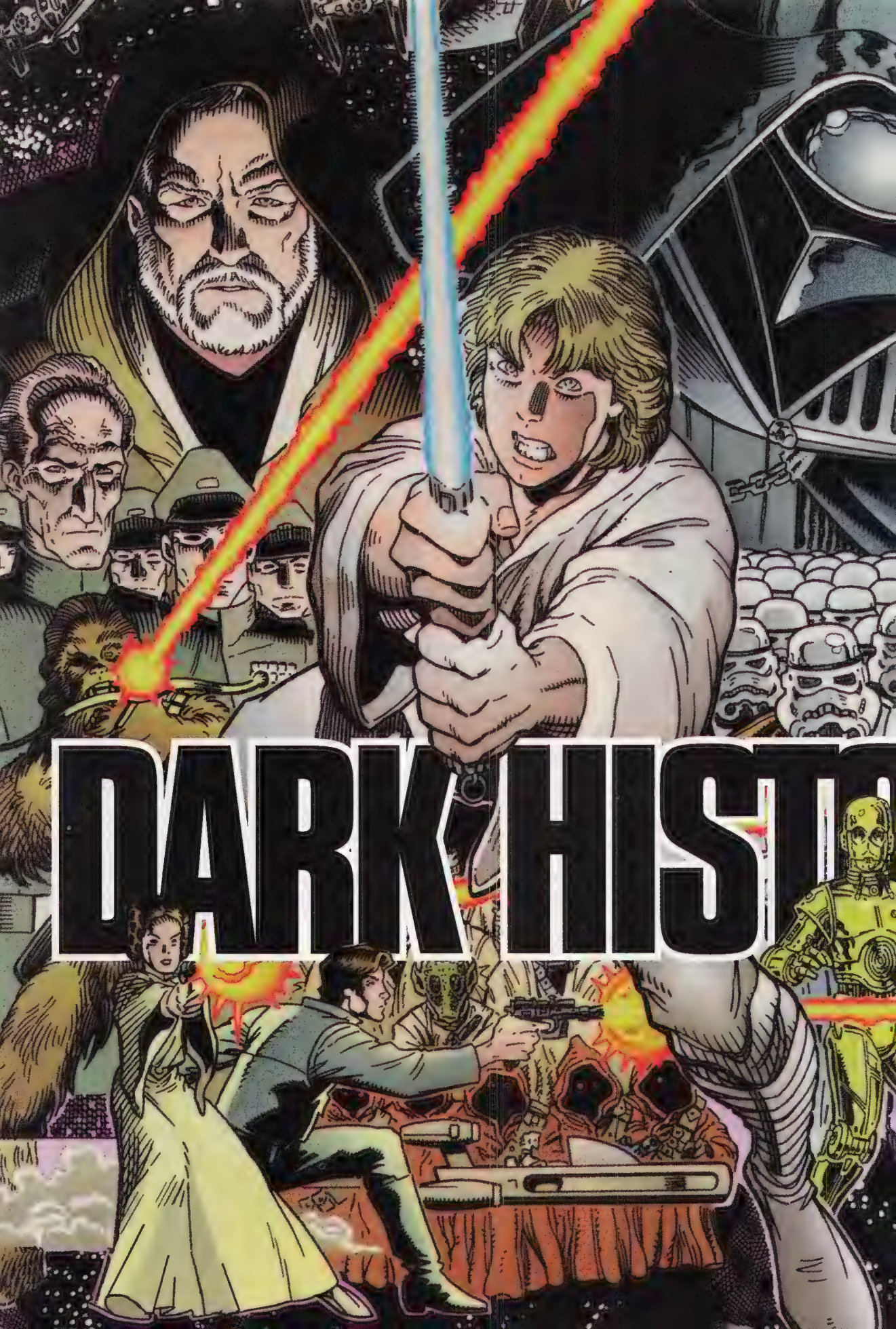
For years, fans have been clamoring for more *Gen*[13]. Finally, it looks like their wish has been granted. Following the format of DC's *Legends of the Dark Knight*, *Gen*[13] *Bootleg* will allow rotating creative teams to put their own spin on the kids.

"We're trying to do a series that will come out on a monthly basis with the best possible talent we can get, instead of a bunch of mini-series and specials scheduled at odd intervals," says series editor Scott Dunbier.

The first two issues, by Alan Davis and Mark Farmer, saw the kids jump into the Lindquist Fault, a portal to alternate realities where all their dreams come true. January's #3 by Dan Norton offers a fairy tale where the wizard Lynch must recruit some talented young people to fight against the evil sorceress Ivana and free their magical land. Issue #4, written by Walt and Louise Simonson with art by Walt, will feature Weapon Zero's Valaria, while #5-#7, written by Terry Moore and drawn by Tomm Coker, center on Fairchild falling in love and trying to solve a "time" mystery.

Plans for the future call for stories by Adam Warren, Chris Sprouse, Gary Frank, and eventually, Adam Hughes. "I see this as a book for the fans," Dunbier says. "I'm really looking forward to their input to see who they want to do *Gen*[13] *Bootleg*."

While the series won't quite fit into the monthly continuity of the regular series, Dunbier says the stories will all try to stay in the here and now, reality-wise. "This is a series where fans will get to see different interpretations and takes on the group," he adds. "Anything at all can happen in these stories, and it probably will." MB


DARK HIST

A "STAR WARS" CONTINUITY GUIDE TO THE FILMS AND DARK HORSE COMICS

BY ANDY LEE

DID YOU KNOW THAT PRINCESS LEIA AND HAN SOLO HAVE THREE KIDS? Or that Boba Fett's really still alive? Heck, even the Emperor survived "Return of the Jedi." No, you didn't miss any new "Star Wars" films, but you *are* missing out on the ever-expanding Star Wars Universe. These questions and plenty more are answered in the pages of Dark Horse Comics' Star Wars comic books.

And yes, they do fit in with Star Wars continuity. "All elements of the comics are submitted to us for approval," says Allan Kausch, continuity editor at Lucasfilm. "This ensures that every comic book series is integrated into the official Star Wars spin-off universe."

So we've checked out all of Dark Horse's Star Wars comics to bring you up to speed. But be warned, this feature gives away many of the story elements. So, sit back and read on about a tale from a long, long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away...

Tales of the Jedi—The Golden Age of the Sith #0-#5

(5,000 years Before "Star Wars") Gav and Jori Daragon are down-on-their-luck hyper-space navigators who washed out of Jedi training. Setting their navicomputer for a long hyper-space jump, they hope to map a lucrative trade route...but their luck is all bad. They reach the Sith Empire, home of a race of powerful Dark Side magicians in the middle of a civil war.

Tales of the Jedi—The Fall of the Sith Empire #1-#5

(4,990 BSW) Gav and Jori Daragon find themselves starting a galaxy-wide conflict known as the Great Hyper-Space War. Republic forces pursue Naga Sadow, a Dark Side Sith magician, forcing him into hiding on the planet Yavin Four. This Dark Horse series launches in spring '97.

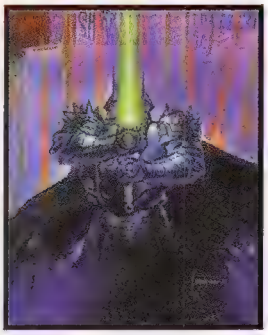
Tales of the Jedi #1-#2 "Ulic Qel-Droma and the Beast Wars of Onderon"

(4,000 BSW) Jedi Ulic Qel-Droma is sent to the planet Onderon to defend the city of Iziz from the outlaw Beast-riders. But Ulic learns that he's chosen the wrong side in this conflict. Queen Amanoa of Iziz is really using the magic of a Dark Jedi named Freedon Nadd to rule the planet. Nadd had died on Onderon long ago, but his spirit lives on. Ulic's Jedi Master, Arca, shows up to bail out his student and defeat Queen Amanoa with the Light Side of the Force.

Tales of the Jedi #3-#5 "The Saga of Nomi Sunrider"

(3,999 BSW) A group of thugs working for Bogga the Hutt kill Jedi Knight Andur Sunrider, as his wife Nomi watches in horror. Nomi cuts the thugs down with Andur's lightsaber and flees to Andur's teacher, Jedi Master Thon, with the Adagen crystals (used for making lightsabers) he was carrying. Bogga sends a space pirate, Finhead Stonebone, after the valuable crystals, but Nomi uses her Force talent to make the pirates fight each other. Together, Nomi and Thon drive off the pirates—*and* Nomi becomes a Jedi.

Tales of the Jedi—The Freedon Nadd Uprising #1-#2



(3,998 BSW) Freedon Nadd was a Dark Jedi who ruled Onderon centuries ago. Now, a group of followers of his spirit (Naddists) led by King Ommin plan to plunge Onderon into the Dark Side. When Master Arca is defeated and kidnapped by Ommin, Ulic Qel-Droma calls in Jedi reinforcements. Galactic Republic armies take Iziz back from the Naddists. Ulic and Nomi Sunrider rescue Master Arca. Ommin dies in battle. And Nadd's spirit warns the Jedi that he *will* be back.

Tales of the Jedi—Dark Lords of the Sith #1-#6

(3,992 BSW) Freedon Nadd's spirit gives Dark Magic power to Satal and Aleema, aristocrats from the Empress Teta system. Calling themselves the Krath, Satal and Aleema attack the Jedi and kill Master Arca. Ulic Qel-Droma poses as a fallen Jedi to infiltrate the Krath, learn Sith magic secrets and use them against the Krath. The

BSW - Before "Star Wars" ASW - After " Star Wars"

SAY WHAT?

A little tongue-tied after your trip to the Star Wars universe? *Wizard* knows how you feel, so we whipped up this handy guide for all those hard-to-pronounce names:

Adagen • (Ahd a gen)
Amanoa • (A man oh ah)
Andur • (An duhr)
Bakura • (Bah kur ah)
Bar-Kooda • (Bar Koo dah)
Bogga • (Bow gah)
Boonda • (Boon dah)
Borleias • (Bor lay as)
Bossk • (Bah-sk)
Byss • (Biss)
Cabrool Nuum • (Cab brol Nuhm)
Cay Qel-Droma • (Kay Kel Dro mah)
Cilpar • (Sil par)
Corran Horn • (Cohr an Horn)
Elattu • (Eee a tu)
Elscol Loro • (Es cohl Lo roh)
Exar Kun • (Ex ar Kuhn)
Firith Olan • (Fear ith O Lahn)
Freedon Nadd • (Free don Nahd)
Gaar Suppoon • (Gar Soup on)
Gav and Jori Daragon • (Gav and Jor ee Dar a gon)
Grigor • (Grig or)
Herran • (Herr an)
Isolder of Hapes • (I sol dahr of Heyps)
Iziz • (Is seez)
Jodo Kast • (Jo doe Kast)
Joruus C'baoth • (Jor ruhs See bay oth)
Kaiburr crystal • (Ky ber crystal)
Kalabra • (Kah lah brah)
Kashyyk • (Kah Shik)
King Ommin • (King Ohm men)
Kirtan Loor • (Kur tahn Lohr)
Krath • (Krahth)
Kyp Durron • (Kip Duhr on)
Loka Hask • (Low kah Hask)
M'Haeli • (Ma Ha lee)
Mimban • (Mihm ban)
Moff Boren Tasci • (Moff Bor en Task el)
Moff Leonia Tavira • (Moff Lee oh nee ah Tah veer a)
Mrisst • (Merlst)
Naga Sadow • (Nah gah Sa dow)
Nampi • (Nahm pee)
Noghri • (No gree)
Nomi Sunrider • (Noh mee Sun rye der)
Onderon • (On dehr on)
Ossus • (Os suss)
Plourr • (Ploor)
Randulf Trommer • (Rahn nolf Trohm mer)
Rorax Falken • (Ror axe Fal kon)
Ry-Kooda • (Rye Kew dah)
Satal and Aleema • (Sa tahl and A lee mah)
Scuppa • (Scoop ah)
Semtin • (Sem tin)
Ssi-Ruk • (See ruk)
Talon Karrde • (Tal on Card)
Thon • (Thohn)
Thrawn • (Thrahwn)
Twi'lek • (Twy Lek)
Ulic Qel-Droma • (U lik Kehl Drow mah)
Xizor • (Shee Zor)
Zuckuss • (Zuhk us) ■AL

suspicious Satal and Aleema inject Ulic with Sith poisons, which push Ulic to the Dark Side. Ulic kills Satal and takes his Sith Amulet. Nomi Sunrider and Cay Qel-Droma (Ulic's brother), try to bring Ulic back from the Dark Side, but fail. Nadd's spirit seduces a Jedi named Exar Kun, who destroys Nadd and uses his power to pursue Ulic and Aleema. During the battle between Kun and Ulic, a Sith spirit appoints Kun "The Dark Lord" with Ulic as his apprentice. Together, they vow to rule the universe.

Tales of the Jedi—The Sith War #1-#6 (3,990 BSW) Ulic Qel-Droma, Exar Kun and Aleema unite their forces. Kun's followers assassinate the Jedi Masters. Kun uses an ancient Sith weapon to send a solar shock-wave towards Ossus, the Jedi stronghold. As the Jedi evacuate, Kun and Ulic raid Ossus, hoping to steal as much Jedi knowledge as they can. In a rage, Ulic kills his Jedi brother Cay Qel-Droma. Witnessing Cay's death, Nomi Sunrider invokes a Force technique to block Ulic from the Force forever. Grief-stricken, Ulic tells the Jedi where to find Kun. With Ossus destroyed, a thousand Jedi converge on Yavin Four, Kun's base of operations. The Jedi blanket Yavin in a wall of destructive Light Force and Kun is presumed dead. Yet his evil spirit is really trapped on Yavin Four and will rise again.

Threepio leads the Droid's "Rebellion"

Droids (5-10 BSW) In "Rebellion" (issues #1-#4), Threepio is reprogrammed to lead a droid revolt against Boonda the Hutt, but Artoo discovers treachery and saves Boonda and all the droids.

In "Season of Revolt," (issues #5-#8), Threepio and Artoo stop the spread of *Savorium*, a drug which will bring peace to the galaxy but make everyone mindless.

Droids Special (5-10 BSW) The Droids help battle-droid IG-88 escape a droid dealer and find a new home on the planet Kalabra.

Jabba the Hutt—The Gaar Suppoon Hit (5-10 BSW) When Jabba and Gaar Suppoon meet for business, their negotiation is filled with double-crosses. The Gaar ends up dead and Jabba gets all his treasure.

Jabba the Hutt—The Hunger of Princess Nampi (5-10 BSW) When Princess Nampi captures Jabba's ship, Jabba tricks the large carnivore into eating his traitorous second-in-command, Scuppa. Jabba then sets off a bomb planted in Scuppa's head and kills Nampi before leaving with her treasures.

Jabba the Hutt—The Dynasty Trap (5-10 BSW) When Crimelord Cabrool Nuum's family plots to kill him, Jabba gets caught in the middle of the hit and eventually just kills them all.

Jabba the Hutt—Betrayal (5-10 BSW) An assassination attempt on Jabba spoils Bib Fortuna's plans for revolt, as Bib is forced to save Jabba.

"Star Wars: A New Hope" This is THE film that started it all. Luke Skywalker finds two droids carrying a message from Princess Leia Organa requesting help from Ben "Obi-Wan" Kenobi. When the droids escape, Luke tracks them to Ben, who reveals himself as a Jedi Master of the Force. After Luke's Uncle Owen and Aunt Beru are killed by Imperial forces searching for the droids, Luke and Ben meet smuggler Han Solo and Chewbacca the Wookiee, who attempt to pilot them to Leia's home planet Alderaan. Instead, their ship, the Millennium Falcon, is captured by Imperials and brought aboard the Empire's ultimate weapon, the Death Star. Kenobi and Darth Vader, a fallen Jedi, battle while Luke, Han and Chewie go after the captured Princess Leia. After rescuing her at the cost of Kenobi's life, Luke uses his newfound Jedi skills and the Force to help destroy the Death Star.

Dark Horse's new adaptation of *Star Wars: A New*

Han and Chewie help seal the Death Star's fate in *Star Wars: A New Hope*

Hope comes out with the "Special Edition" release of the movie in late January.

Splinter of the Mind's Eye #1-#4

(0+ After "Star Wars") On the planet Mimban, Luke and Leia search for the legendary Kaiburr crystal, which gives its owner total power over the Force. Darth Vader shows up to capture them. In battle with Vader, Leia takes up a lightsaber and is killed. Luke attacks Vader and cuts off his arm before Vader falls into a bottomless pit. Then Luke uses the crystal to bring Leia back to life.

River of Chaos #1-#4

(0+ ASW) Leia goes to the Imperial world of M'Haeli to start a rebel movement. An Imperial spy named Ranulf Trommer infiltrates the rebels and falls in love with Mora—secretly the lost princess of M'Haeli—who is captured by Grigor, the Imperial governor. Leia discovers that Trommer is an Imperial spy, but he convinces her to let him save Mora, and then joins the rebels to fight for their just cause.

"The Empire Strikes Back"

(3 ASW) When the rebels abandon their base on the Ice planet Hoth, Han, Leia and Chewie try to evade Imperial patrols by hiding out in the cloud city Bespin, home of Han's smuggling buddy Lando Calrissian. Meanwhile, Luke heads to the planet Dagobah to train under Master Yoda. When Lando betrays Han to Darth Vader in order to protect the citizens of Bespin, Han is frozen in carbonite and taken by bounty hunter Boba Fett to intergalactic crimelord Jabba the Hutt. Luke goes to rescue his friends, but without complete Jedi training, he's vulnerable to the Dark Side. He then battles Vader, who reveals himself as Luke's father, fallen Jedi Anakin Skywalker. Luke narrowly escapes Vader, but not before losing his hand in a lightsaber duel. Lando, too late to rescue Han, saves Leia, Chewie and Luke, retreating to battle the Empire another day.

Shadows of the Empire #1-#6

(3+ ASW) Prince Xizor, head of the Black Sun crime organization, has a long-standing vendetta against Darth Vader. So, he's out to kill Luke Skywalker in order to ruin Vader's plans of turning Luke over to the Dark Side. Leia and Chewbacca travel in disguise to meet Xizor and learn who is behind the assassination attempts on Luke, not realizing Xizor is really behind the treachery. Xizor attempts to seduce Leia before Chewie escapes with her. Boba Fett's having trouble getting the carbonite-frozen Han back to Jabba, as bounty hunter IG-88 interferes. In the ensuing battle, Fett's ship is damaged, so he flees for repairs and is ambushed by bounty hunters Bossk, Zuckuss and 4-LOM. Fett outsmarts them with booby traps, and outwits more bounty hunters, including some of Jabba's thugs on Tatooine, before bringing Solo to Jabba. Meanwhile, as Luke and Xizor battle in space, Vader discovers Xizor's plans and saves Luke by destroying Xizor's ship. Luke and Lando escape into hyperspace in the confusion.

"Return of the Jedi"

(4 ASW) Luke's Jedi powers defeat the mighty Jabba and rescue Han. Luke then returns to Dagobah to complete his training with Master Yoda, but finds Yoda dying. Meanwhile, the rebels learn of a second Death Star orbiting the forest moon of Endor. With the help of the Ewoks—inhabitants of Endor—Han and Leia destroy an Imperial shield generator protecting the Death Star. In the meantime, Luke battles Vader as the Emperor watches. When the Emperor turns upon Luke, Vader saves his son and is mortally wounded in destroying the evil Emperor. Lando, piloting the Millennium Falcon, and an X-Wing squadron travel to the power core of the now-unshielded Death Star and destroy it once and for all.

X-Wing Rogue Squadron—The Rebel Opposition

(4-6+ ASW) The Rogue Squadron travels to the planet Cilpar to convince the local rebels to join the alliance. The Rogues meet a woman named Elscol Loro, who claims to represent the legitimate government of Cilpar, but doesn't trust the Alliance or the Imperials. When the Rogues help Loro defeat the local Imperial forces, she joins Rogue Squadron—her work on Cilpar completed.

X-Wing Rogue Squadron—The Phantom Affair

(4-6+ ASW) While the Rogues attempt to acquire a cloaked "phantom ship" from a technological center on the planet Mrlsst, Wedge meets an old

A NOVEL IDEA

Here's a look at some of the novels out there to further whet your appetite for the Star Wars mythos.

X-Wing Rogue Squadron

(6+ ASW) Wedge Antilles, hero of the rebellion, and the Rogue Squadron are on a mission to take out an Imperial base on Borleias. Kirtan Loor, an old enemy of Rogue member Corran Horn, sets a trap for the Rogues, but they escape and take the base at Borleias.

The Truce at Bakura

(4+ ASW) When the Rebels intercept a call for help from the Imperial outpost at Bakura, they go to help the Bakuran Imperials drive off an invading race called the Ssi-Ruk and, in the process, win Bakura over to the Republic. Leia sees the ghost of her father Anakin Skywalker and eventually forgives him for his sins as Darth Vader.

The Courtship of Princess Leia

(8+ ASW) On a diplomatic mission, Leia meets Prince Isolder of Hapes, who wants to marry her. Han kidnaps Leia in a last attempt to win her over. When they crash on the planet Dathomir, Luke and Isolder rescue them. Along the way, Isolder falls in love with a Force-sensitive witch returning with him to Hapes, while Han and Leia tie the knot.

Dark Force Rising

(9+ ASW) Joruus C'baoth, a Dark Jedi clone created by the Emperor, faces off with Luke. Leia successfully brings the Noghri, a race of warriors indebted to Darth Vader and currently serving Grand Admiral Thrawn, over to the Alliance. Han and Lando go after the Katana Fleet, a group of 200 Dreadnaught-class automated ships missing since the days of the Old Republic. Thrawn makes off with 180 of these ships, but needs crewmen to run them. The Dark Horse comic adaptation of this tale begins in May '97.

The Last Command

(9+ ASW) Luke, Leia and Han face a final confrontation with Grand Admiral Thrawn. His plans to end the New Republic fail when Joruus C'baoth goes insane. A Noghri—who had been indebted to Darth Vader for saving its race—kills Thrawn in the name of Princess Leia, seeing as how she's Vaders daughter. The Dark Horse comic adaptation begins in November '97.

The Jedi Academy Trilogy

(12+ ASW)

Jedi Search • Captured as slaves in the Kessel mines, Han and Chewie meet Kyp Durron, who unknowingly is adept in the Force. The trio escapes Kessel with the Empire's prize weapon, a giant star-destroying ship called the Sun Crusher.

Dark Apprentice • Luke takes Kyp into his new academy on Yavin Four. Kyp, too eager to learn, starts studying the Dark Side under the spirit of Exar Kun, who has been trapped on Yavin Four for 4,000 years since the Sith War. Exar and Kyp, now belonging to the Dark Side, discorporate Luke's spirit from his body.

Champions of the Force • While Han convinces Kyp to return to the Light Side, Leia's children use the Force to contact and reunite Luke's spirit with his body. Together, they destroy the spirit of Exar Kun. ■*AL*

BSW - Before "Star Wars" ASW - After " Star Wars"

enemy at the negotiating table: Loka Hask, the man who killed his parents, now an Imperial Captain. But the Rogues discover that the phantom ship is a hoax. Scientist Rorax Falken faked the technology to get money from the Imperials, who then come after the scientist and battle the Rogues. In combat, Falken uses a wormhole generator which sucks Hask's Imperial cruiser away. Presuming Hask is dead, the Rogues leave.

X-Wing Rogue Squadron—Battleground Tatooine (4-6+ ASW) The Rogues battle the Imperials (under Captain Semtin's leadership) for possession of Firith Olan, a former associate of Jabba the Hutt, who has information on a secret Imperial weapons cache. Semtin kidnaps Olan on the planet Twi'lek and leaves his troops behind for slavery, but the Rogues rescue Semtin's men and go after the Imperial and the weapons. Rogue pilot Elscol Loro endangers the Rogues with a suicide maneuver that wins the day, although resulting in Wedge kicking her out of the Rogues for endangering all of them. He gives Loro some of the newfound weapons and the former Imperial troops so Loro can still battle the Empire. Wounded, Olan ends up getting his brain transported into a droid body.

X-Wing Rogue Squadron—The Warrior Princess (4-6+ ASW) One of the Rogues, Plourr, turns out to be a princess from the planet Eiattu. Her family was wiped out in a royal purge years ago, but her brother, Herran, is back on Eiattu leading a rebel faction against the planets aristocracy. Plourr and the Rogues try to unite the warring factions and drive off the ambitious Imperial Moff Leonia Tavira, whos trying to take advantage of the civil unrest on the planet. Leonia escapes and the Rogues unite the planet.

Heir to the Empire #1-#6 (9+ ASW) Imperial Grand Admiral Thrawn returns from the outer reaches of the galaxy to unite the remaining Imperial forces. At a secret Imperial weapons storehouse guarded by Joruus C'baoth, Thrawn finds a cloaking device and a cloning machine. C'baoth, capable of powerfully wielding the Force, is an insane clone of the Jedi Master Jorus C'baoth, who the Emperor had killed.

Married to Han for a year, Leia is pregnant with twins. Thrawn promises to hand over Leia's Force-sensitive twins, as well as Leia and Luke, to C'baoth—who can mold them as Dark Jedi in exchange for his help in defeating the Rebels. While Leia goes with Chewie to the Wookiee homeworld Kashyyk for protection, a smuggler named Talon Karrde captures Luke. But the young Jedi manages to escape. In the end, Thrawn attacks the Sluis Van shipyard and renders many of the Rebellion's ships useless.

Dark Empire #1-#6 (10+ ASW) The Emperor, resurrected in a clone body, has new weapons: World Devastators, machines of mass destruction which can crush a planet. The Emperor captures Luke and offers him the Dark Side of the Force. Luke, planning to turn the Dark Side against the Emperor, embraces it, even though it may corrupt him as it did his father.

Leia and Han run into an old enemy, Boba Fett, who reveals that the Sarlaac that ate him in "Return of the Jedi" found him "indigestible." They escape Fett, only to be captured by the Emperor. They obtain valuable information to use against the World Devastators before escaping. Leia returns and frees Luke from the Dark Side. Luke explains he had to cross over to know why his father Darth Vader chose the Dark Side. Luke and Leia battle the Emperor who, in a fit of rage, conjures up a giant Force storm, endangering the entire rebel fleet. Luke, Leia and her unborn child use the Force to defeat the Emperor, while the rebels beat the World Devastators with the information retrieved by Han and Leia.

Dark Empire II #1-#6 (10+ ASW) Seven Dark Side Warriors rise to implement the Emperor's contingency plan, Operation: Shadow Hand, and defeat the rebels once and for all. The Imperials have yet another weapon of mass destruction, the Galaxy Gun, while the Dark Side Warriors place the Emperor in his last cloned body (He's been cloned too many times and can't use the process anymore). The rebellion is beaten back by the Dark Side Warriors and the Galaxy Gun, so the rebels retreat and Leia gives birth to her third child, Anakin Solo.

Boba Fett on a rescue mission in *When the Fat Lady Sings*

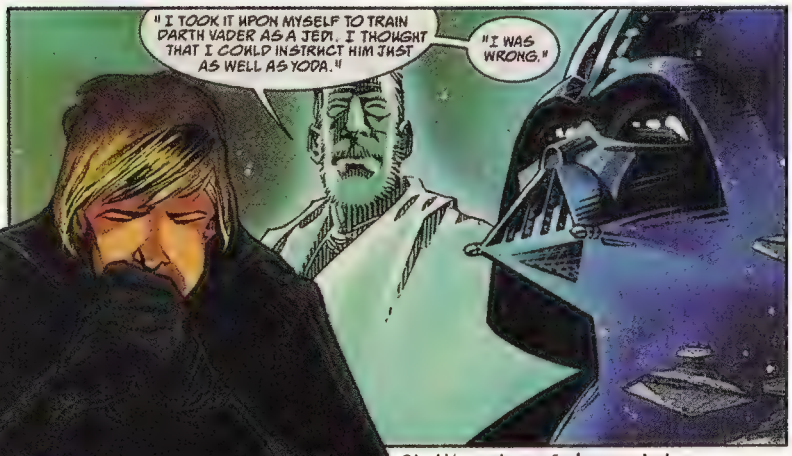
Boba Fett—Bounty on Bar-Kooda (10+ ASW) Gorgo the Hutt hires Boba Fett to track down Bar-Kooda so he can win the hand of his true love, Anachro. Boba captures an alien known as "the Magician" in order to track down Bar-Kooda and deliver him to Gorgo.

Boba Fett—When the Fat Lady Swings (10+ ASW) When Gorgo the Hutt wants to marry a rival Hutt's daughter, the father of the bride has his own daughter kidnapped in order to blame Gorgo and start a feud. Gorgo hires Boba Fett to rescue his bride-to-be and also hires Ry-Kooda, Bar-Kooda's brother, to kill Fett after the job's done. But Fett rescues the bride and beats Ry-Kooda, too.

Boba Fett—Twin Engines of Destruction (10+ ASW) There's an impostor bounty hunter named Jodo Kast out there dressing like Boba Fett and using Mandalorian armor. Fett sets a trap for him and, although the impostor's good, he's not good enough to beat the true Fett.

Empire's End #1-#2 (11 ASW) The Emperor can live forever if he finds a host with Jedi blood, so he goes after Anakin Solo, Leia and Han's child. The rebellion rams a ship into the Galaxy Gun, destroying it and the Imperial throne world of Byss. In a fight for Anakin Solo, the Emperor strikes down a Jedi named Brand. But as the Emperor's spirit moves to enter Anakin, the dying Brand leaps in the way. The Emperor's spirit is trapped in Brand and dies with him, never to return. W

While researching this feature, Andy Lee got in tune with the Force, accidentally vaporized Ankeny, Iowa, and is now in hiding from the Feds.



Obi-Wan admits failure to Luke in *Heir to the Empire*

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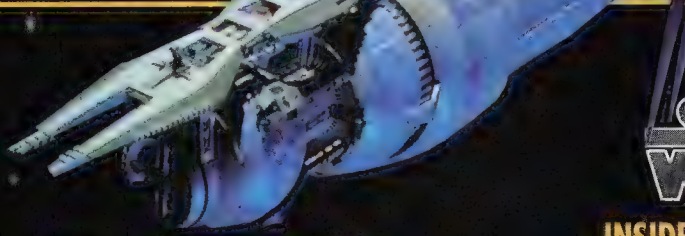

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FEBRUARY '97

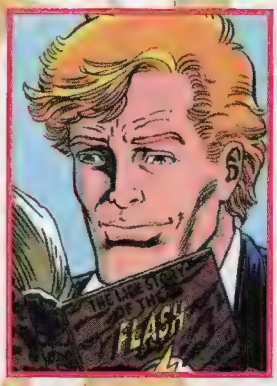
Wizard *casts the* Flash *movie!*

Casting Call

By a bunch of *Wizard* staffers

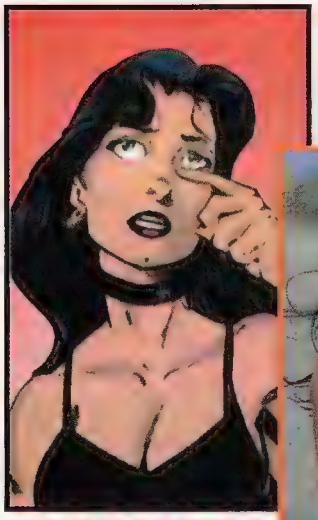
All photos by the Everett Collection, unless otherwise stated.

Okay...we know, we know—the "Flash" TV show wasn't the best, but at least it had potential. Now, if only they were to do it right by bringing Wally West and the gang to the big screen, and getting those ILM guys to do the effects. It could be one of the biggest blockbusters ever to hit the screen. Who wouldn't wanna see this? A guy dressed in one of the best superhero costumes ever designed, who can run close to the speed of light and goes around fighting crime. Throw in some cool bad guys and you can't go wrong. Of course, it would need to have a super-cool story, and we'd want to use some major box-office draws to make it an even bigger hit. Take a look at who *Wizard* would cast.



THE FLASH

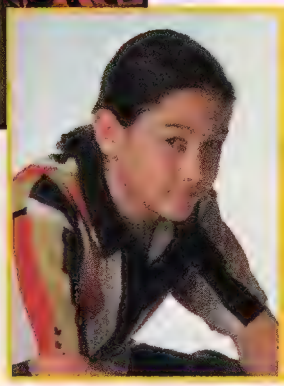
For the role of Wally West, we need someone who can think quick on his feet, but is also just a big kid at heart. Matthew McConaughey has shown in "A Time to Kill" that he has the qualities to play our leading role.



Jim McHugh/Outline

LINDA PARK

Ming-Na Wen ("The Single Guy") is the only logical choice to play Linda Park, Channel 4's newscaster and Wally's understanding girlfriend. She's proven she can play the sensitive type and the smart aleck.

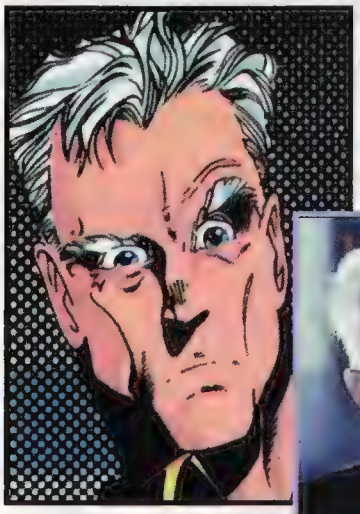


IMPULSE

Fitting his name, Impulse needs to be an act-first-think-later kind of kid. We think Joseph Gordon-Levitt, in his "3rd Rock from the Sun" role, has proven he's got the look and the know-how to be Bart Allen's alter ego.

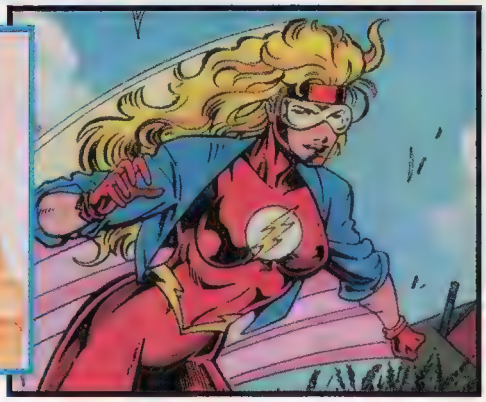
MAX MERCURY

Of all the speedsters, Max Mercury is the most mysterious, yet probably the toughest. Malcolm McDowell ("Star Trek: Generations") has that mysterious air about him, making him the goods for this role.



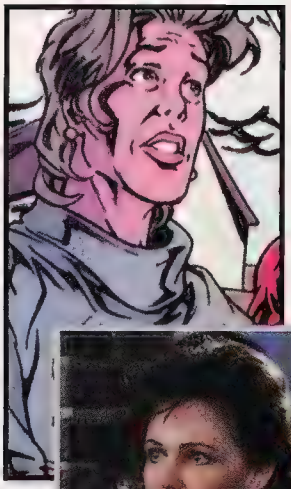
JAY GARRICK

The Golden Age Flash has to be played by someone who looks like he's been around fighting the good fight for a long time. Paul Newman ("Nobody's Fool") has the look of experience a veteran superhero should have.



JESSE QUICK

Lisa Kudrow might play a dingy broad on "Friends," but she's not really one. We'd like to see her take on the role of Jesse Quick. With her look and acting ability, she'd be great.



IRIS ALLEN

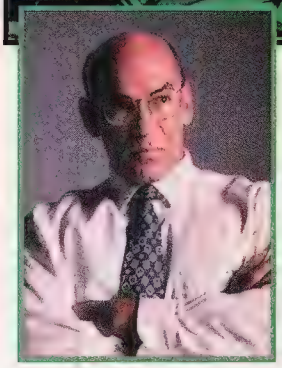
Who better than Sally Field ("Eye for an Eye") to play Iris Allen, the matriarch of the Flashes? She definitely has the experience, and with a little makeup, she'd make the perfect motherly type.

PIED PIPER

Eric Stoltz ("Killing Zoe," "2 Days in the Valley") has to be Piper, electronic whiz kid and Wally's friend. We know he can act, so all he'd have to do is let his hair grow longer and he's a perfect match.

ABRA KADABRA

For the role of the maniacal magician Abra Kadabra, James Woods ("The Specialist") is a shoo-in. He's played nut jobs before, so this part would be right up his alley.



KOBRA

The evil force behind a lot of recent trouble for Wally is Kobra. We needed someone who's built, bald and has a commanding tone that no one would disobey. Who better than Mitch Pileggi, who does it every week as Director Skinner on "The X-Files"?

SAVITAR

Savitar, the self-proclaimed God of Speed and all-around wacko, requires someone who's tough, brutal and conniving. Adrian Pasdar, who has that type of acting experience from "Profit," wouldn't have any problems with this part at all. W

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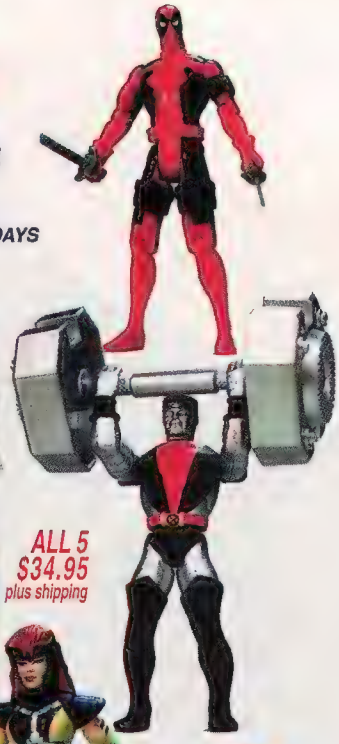

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David's Supergirl, a protoplasmic being, must now cope with having a human soul

THE WIZARD Q&A:

Prolific writer Peter David provides the inside scoop on all his projects, including *Supergirl, Aquaman* and *The Incredible Hulk*

By Matthew Brady

EVER HEAR THE STORY about the guy who started in the mailroom at a huge company, and became an industry big shot in a few short years? Well, you will now. While he didn't start in the mailroom, Peter David did start out working as an assistant in the direct sales offices of Marvel Comics, working with retailers to sell more Marvel comics. David was eventually given a shot to write a book that was slumping sales-wise: *The Incredible Hulk*. That was about 10 years ago.

Since then, the flamboyant and often outspoken David has written in practically every comic book and science fiction venue available. He's written comics for both Marvel and DC, Star Trek novels, his own novels (*Howling Mad, Knight Life*), screenplays for movies ("Oblivion," which is currently on video), a weekly column ("But I Digress" in *Comics Buyer's Guide*), and just recently, he co-created the sci-fi/comedy TV series "Space Cases" with Bill Mumy, airing Saturday nights on Nickelodeon. To say the guy is busy would be an understatement.

Along with his large workload, David occasionally lights a fire under the collective butt of the comics industry with his tongue-in-cheek and sarcastic diatribes against the occasional weird things that happen in the industry. In a voice that combines seriousness, sarcasm, a dash of whine, and plenty of humor, here's David, telling it like it is.

Peter David

Vital Stats

Name: Peter A. David
Occupation: Writer of stuff
Born: September 23, 1956 in Fort Meade, Md.
Base of Operations: Long Island, N.Y.
Career Highlights: A 10-year-long (and counting) run on *The Incredible Hulk* for Marvel; *Aquaman* and *Supergirl* for DC; co-wrote last year's *Marvel versus DC* mini-series; co-created "Space Cases" television show; has written numerous Star Trek novels; and won the Haxtur Award in Spain for *Hulk* #420—the acclaimed AIDS issue
Favorite Future Scenario: "Twenty years from now, I can see myself sitting in the back of my limo saying, 'Home, Todd.' "

WIZARD: Now that you've been on *The Incredible Hulk* for about 10 years, do you ever feel like you're burned out, or do you still feel the same excitement as you did on the first day?

PETER DAVID: When I started writing *Hulk*, I was very fuzzy as to what I was going to be doing with the character. I had some general ideas, but it was going to be a very much exploratory effort. That hasn't changed. It's still an effort; it always has been something that I don't do lightly, or just toss off or just figure that I can walk through an issue. Every issue of *Hulk* is a struggle. Every issue of anything is a struggle, because writing takes effort. On that basis, my feelings for writing the Hulk haven't changed in the 10 years that I've been doing the book, which is why it always breaks me up when someone says that they could tell that I just dashed off a particular issue, because I know that I'm trying my best with every single issue of anything I write.

Since you've been writing the Hulk, he's been gray, green, big, bigger, and now...cranky. Are the transformations that you've put the Hulk through your way of keeping the character fresh and exciting for you?

Sure. I would like to think that the Hulk is representative of most people. Most people are constantly changing and evolving. The Hulk's permutations are just more visible than most. You can have someone, for example, who started out very humble, and then went on to become extremely egocentric. His outward appearance would remain basically the same. If, on the other hand, he was a comic book character, his head would inflate. If he became jealous, you could color him green, literally. So, the Hulk's different permutations reflect changes or shifts in his state of mind as I've been trying to develop the character. Since this is comic books, you try to have as much of a physical representation as possible.

Of the various incarnations of the Hulk that you've done, do you find that you have a favorite?

I have a certain fondness for Mr. Fixit [the gray Hulk, who was a Las Vegas mob enforcer], I suppose, simply because he was so...bizarre. I liked the whole Las Vegas environment, the insanity of the Hulk walking around in a three-piece suit, and I loved the turnaround in terms of the Hulk/Bruce Banner relationship. Here was the Hulk who finally had his act together, and it was Banner who was coming in and screwing it up.

One incarnation that you've never really spent that much time on is the savage green "Hulk smash puny humans!" version...

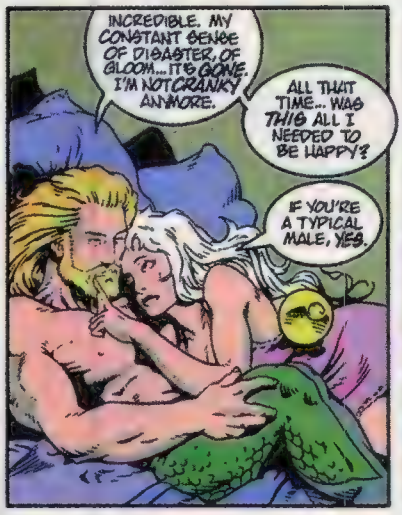
No, I really haven't. I worked with the "Hulk smash!" Hulk when I was in the midst of doing the "merge" storyline that culminated in *Hulk* #377. The reason that I brought him back was that I was planning to do a storyline that was merging the Hulk with Bruce Banner [making them one being], but I felt that something was missing. At the time, the Hulk had the gray incarnation, and I felt that something was missing from the mix, and if I tried to do the story without the savage, green Hulk, I would not really be doing justice to the history of this character. He's been such a part of the Hulk mentality for so long, that if I just ignored him, the story wouldn't have seemed right.

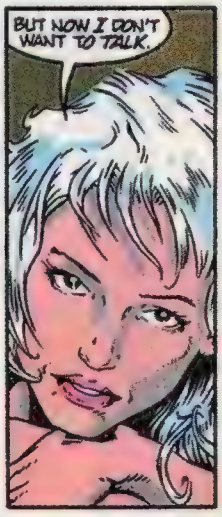
I was concerned because I didn't want to get rid of the gray Hulk just to accommodate the green Hulk. That's when I had the brainstorm that made me realize that [while] Bruce is a multiple personality, "multiple" doesn't just mean two, it means more than one—which was a line of reasoning Doc Samson ended up reiterating in *Hulk*, because what he was doing was mirroring [my] thoughts.

What about the Hulk's supporting characters?

Rick Jones and [his wife] Marlo will be back. Janis [from the *Hulk: Future Imperfect* mini-series] is a regular member of the supporting cast. We have Cary St. Lawrence, the army colonel who is the designated pursuer of the Hulk. Henry Peter Gyrich will keep popping up here and there. We will see the return of the Pantheon as an addition to the mix. Betty Banner has momentarily disappeared, and I'm hoping that there will be some curiosity as to what she's been up to. We do see Talbot briefly as well. Both he and Betty are lurking in the periphery for the time being. Also, we haven't seen the last of The Leader, and The Maestro is a constant reminder, at least in the Hulk's mind, of just how evil he could end up to be.

You've been quoted as saying that you'll stop writing the Hulk





David gives Aquaman (here with Dolphin) a slice of real life with a relationship and the stress caused by ruling a kingdom

when you have no more stories to tell. After 10 years, is there an end in sight?

I don't know; I plot generally six months to a year in advance, a group of stories. As I approach the end of any particular arc, I always wonder to myself, "Where am I going to go with this now? Is there anything left for me to say about the character?" At some time, I will reach that point where I'll feel that there is really nothing else I want to do at the moment, but it hasn't happened yet.

I should also say that [the new penciler] Adam Kubert is very enthusiastic about working on the Hulk, and is bringing his own thoughts and ideas to the book, so that's always like an infusion of fresh blood that can only help.

Speaking of plotting recent events, was the "Heroes Reborn" revamp of Marvel's core characters, including the Hulk, simply thrust upon you, or did you have some level of input?

"Heroes Reborn" was thrust upon everybody. When "Heroes Reborn" initially came up, the Hulk was essentially canceled as far as I knew. As far as everybody knew, at the time, we were canceling the Hulk, and making him a supporting character in the new *Iron Man*—although if you look at *Iron Man*, you really can't tell that it's the Hulk who's supposed to be the supporting character; it reads more like *The Hulk Guest-Starring Iron Man*.

In any event, I thought the book was gone. It was primarily due to the protest and anger from the fans, and the support from people within Marvel who looked at each other and said, "Why in God's name are we canceling *The Hulk*?" that the book was saved. It was then decided that there would be two Hulks, and that the Hulk would indeed be a major tie-in to the Liefeld-Lee universe, and a major factor in the eventual resolution of that particularly curious corner of the Marvel Universe.

Fresh off Wolverine, *penciler Adam Kubert smashes his way onto* Hulk *with issue #454 in April*

While we're talking about "Heroes Reborn," what's your opinion about it, aside from the business aspect?

To me, there is nothing more aside from the business aspect. It was done for business considerations, and money considerations. It wasn't done out of any editorial drive. To my mind it was done as a massive lack of confidence [held] by the powers that be, saying that Marvel's editorial staff and Marvel's current creative crew couldn't produce stories that would sell. *Captain America* was going up in sales in a fairly acclaimed series of stories by Mark Waid, and *Thor* was beginning to increase in sales as well, because comic books traditionally go up and down in sales. This is no shock, but the powers that be wanted something really big and event-driven, because Marvel is now event-driven rather than story-driven. They basically organized this in hopes of getting some sort of major cache for Marvel.

I must admit to a mild degree of glee upon seeing that Marvel's stock posted such impressive third-quarter losses. Stock prices on Marvel stock dropped by around 30 percent, so ha-ha, nyah, nyah, nyah. Hey Marvel, there's your event! [*Laughter*]

Seriously, it's difficult for me to separate my annoyance on behalf of this slap in the face to Marvel's creative and editorial teams on the part of Marvel management from the stories themselves. Overall, I think it's kind of problematic, and it certainly hasn't made my life any easier, because I was going in a particular direction with the Hulk, and the "Onslaught" crossover dragged it in a totally different direction. It took me three issues to pull the book, kicking and screaming, back in the direction that I was trying to go. It took a while, and I think I lost a portion of my readership during that time, because they didn't want to sit around and wait and see the Hulk restored to where I was going before. It really took it off course, and I would've greatly preferred that it had not happened. I pretty much like to be able to work off on my own; I'm not one for crossovers. "Onslaught" was a tremendous pain in the ass.

All in all, I'm kind of underwhelmed. I read all of the first "Heroes Reborn" stuff except *Avengers*. I think that it's okay. It doesn't knock my socks off, but it's okay. Considering that this is supposed to be a major Marvel event upon which they are hinging, as near as I can tell, a good deal of the company's editorial future, I don't know if "okay" is going to be enough to blow up anybody's skirts in a business sense.

Moving over to DC, you've been on *Aquaman* for over two years—what's going to be happening with him?

At this point, there's nowhere to go but down, as in down into the depths, and exploring aspects of the ocean. I'm trying to concentrate on shorter story arcs at the moment, because after doing one that basically ran a year-and-a-half, I want to try to do something a little more reigned-in and accessible. We're currently doing a three-parter that concerns the death of

DAVID'S GOLIATH Résumé

Sure, Peter David has written a lot of comic books over the years, but hey, the guy writes tons of stuff, period. Along with comics, David's written short stories, screenplays for both movies and television, games and novels. Here's a short list of some of his other projects, along with a few comments about them from the guy himself.

Howling Mad: A Tale of Reluctant Heroes A wolf gets bitten by a werewolf, and turns into a human. David wrote the novel, and also the screenplay that was never optioned. "I signed more copies than Berkley admits were printed," David says.

"More Trouble in Little China" The sequel to the 1986 action movie "Big Trouble in Little China." "I wrote the outline, got paid, and like the majority of projects in Hollywood, it never got produced."

"Transmutant 4" & "Transmutant 5" David wrote two screenplays featuring Jack Deth, a future cop who kills zombie-like creatures. "It was a lot of fun, but I think both movies had a budget of $1.98. Most of what [I wrote] never made it onto the screen."

"Oblivion" & "Oblivion 2" "I was much more pleased with how these came out," David says of his two screenplays. "The studio actually spent money, and put people in the movie that you'd actually recognize. It's basically cowboys and aliens, and my dad has a role in the second movie."

"Star Trek: The Next Generation" "I pitched an idea, wrote the outline, made the revisions and was paid," he says of an episode proposal. "They passed it along to the top producers of the show, who promptly spiked it."

"Babylon 5" "I had a lot of fun on both," David says of his two episodes "Soul Mates" and "There All the Honor Lies." "I wrote them generally with three plots: the main plot, the secondary plot and the sillier side plot. No matter what I was trying to say in the episode, people always remember the silly plot."

And as for his future plans? David says he's got plenty of intentions to do more television and movie work; it's just a matter of time. *Finding* time, that is. "I have a lot on my plate right now, but maybe someday…I might just get back to 'Star Trek' or 'Babylon 5'…someday." ■ *MB*

Aquaman's dolphin mother, and then we will have Aquaman exploring this new, previously unfound trench [at the bottom of the ocean].

One of the things we do want to explore is the limits of the characters. How far down can they go? How dark does it have to get before even *they* can't see? We're also going to be exploring some changes and some aftereffects of the alien invasion in terms of how it has affected Aquaman's personality, particularly the discoveries he made about what it is that he can and cannot do. In the resolution to the alien invasion storyline [in *Aquaman* #25], Aquaman uncorked some seriously formidable powers that had been only hinted at. [EDITOR'S NOTE: *Aquaman discovered that he can control all sea life and not just speak to it.*] Over the next six issues or so, we're going to see more of what it is that Aquaman could become, and it's pretty damn scary.

With Aquaman, you pretty much took the old traditional character and radically changed him. Was he thought of as that much of a discard by DC editorial?

A discard? No, Aquaman has always been and will be an important part of the DC Universe, but remember also, this character has gone through more series than the Yankees. The problem was that series after series would come out and fail. When you have someone who is a nine-time loser, it's difficult to float the boat of the retailers by coming up with the same stuff again. The basic reaction of the retailers is, "Oh, God. Aquaman again? Aquaman doesn't work." Radical decisions were required. This is not to say that it was immediately embraced by the DC upper echelon; it took some convincing. Whacking off the hand of one of the DC mainstays, and doing some really radical retooling of the character, was something that had to be approached with caution. With my proposed changes, editorial was very concerned, and very cautious. The only ones who enthusiastically embraced the concept with open arms were the folks in the marketing division, who figure that they could make a good-looking toy out of a character with a harpoon for a hand.

What direction are you going in on *Supergirl*? Is she going to be the darker member of the Superman family?

Supergirl is currently going through a specific story arc that I have created to explore the concept of acquiring a human soul. A soul that is a dark one, as it is. The way that I really envisioned it is that Supergirl is almost a character of light, whereas the character of Linda Danvers, with whom she merged, is a character of darkness. What we're seeing over the first year of *Supergirl* is a struggle between those light and dark aspects.

This particular story arc with the battle for Supergirl's new soul only really goes through issue #9. As we'll see over the course of the first seven issues, Supergirl will be acting in a manner that would've previously been alien to her…lying, being selfish, all the nastier aspects of humanity. What we're really trying to put across is that here is someone who felt that she was lacking something by not being a part of humanity. Now, she is a part of humanity, and it seems to have only negatives. One of the things that she's going to have to work on finding is the bright side and the positive and uplifting side of being part of the human race.

Once Supergirl deals with all this, where will things go from there?

Well, once she has found her place within herself, then she has to work on finding her place in the world, where she really fits into the rest of the DC Universe, and where she fits into [her hometown] Leesburg. She's going to learn the identity of the strange little kid who is kind of a recurring character in the book, and she's going to find out just how he relates to her, and how she in turn relates to everything else in Leesburg. It really plays off the concept that no person is an island. She's going to be trying to live a day-to-day existence in Leesburg, while dealing with the citizenry thereof, and with herself.

Probably *Supergirl* is going to be one of the most socially involved books, in terms of living in a day-to-day society. [It will be] soap opera-ish if you will, making this a self-contained world that Supergirl is a part of, and seeing where her place is, and learning something about what is genuinely Supergirl's true nature, if only Supergirl will actually believe it.

Looking at the market as a whole, what's your view of Marvel and DC these days?

I think at this point, DC is much more solid. Marvel is in a situation that their fates stand or fall depending on whatever Ron Perelman wants at any given moment, and Perelman has his own financial problems to worry about.

It would not surprise me at all if Perelman sold Marvel within the next year. What I would find really morbidly interesting is if Marvel would be bought by Time-Warner, which would make eminent sense, and because of the growth of the independent comic market with Image and such, it wouldn't even be a question of a monopoly anymore. With the success of the *Marvel versus DC* stuff, the concept of putting both companies under one roof would be a fairly attractive one. No, that wouldn't surprise me at all, considering that 10 years ago, the DC characters were going to be sold to Marvel. So, who knows? Certainly the recent stock market losses are not good for Marvel, whereas Time-Warner has become this media megalith, so it very well could swing in that direction, at which point I have no idea what would happen.

Where do you see yourself in 20 years?

I have no idea. I'll be 60. I have a hard time seeing myself writing comic books when I'm 60. I don't know if when I'm 60 years old that I'll be able to write anything that the average 10- or 12-year-old would be interested in reading. I don't know if they'll be interested in my perspective, or what I have to say. When I'm 60, I see myself concentrating more on novels and movies; I really don't know if I'll be doing comic books at that time. I have a hard time seeing that, but you never know. Hopefully, I'll be living off of all the money from all that great "Space Cases" merchandise that people will be buying like hotcakes [*Laughter*]. **W**

Unlike Aquaman, Matthew Brady, who also gives the scoop on Gen[13] elsewhere in this issue, has nowhere to go but sideways.

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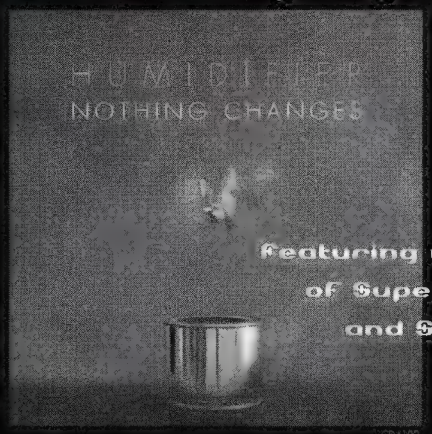

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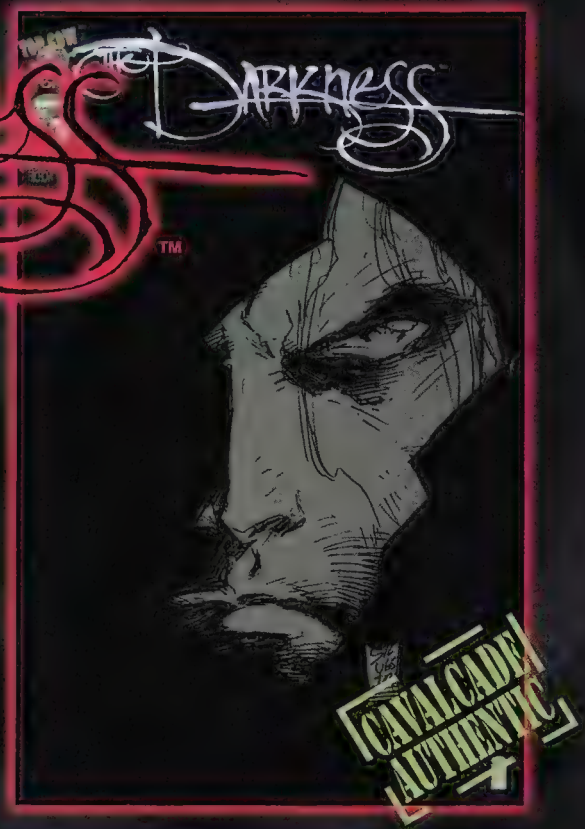

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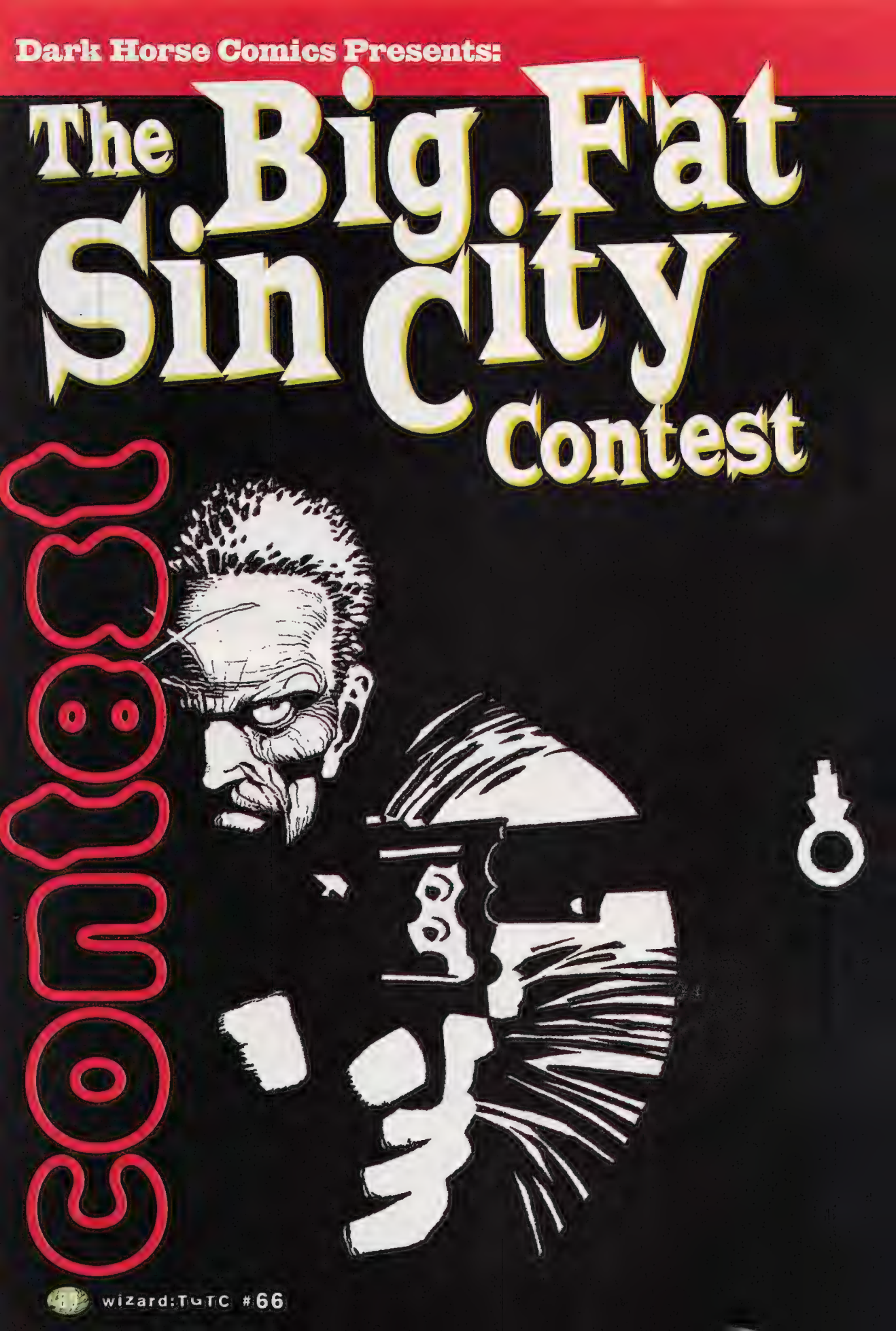

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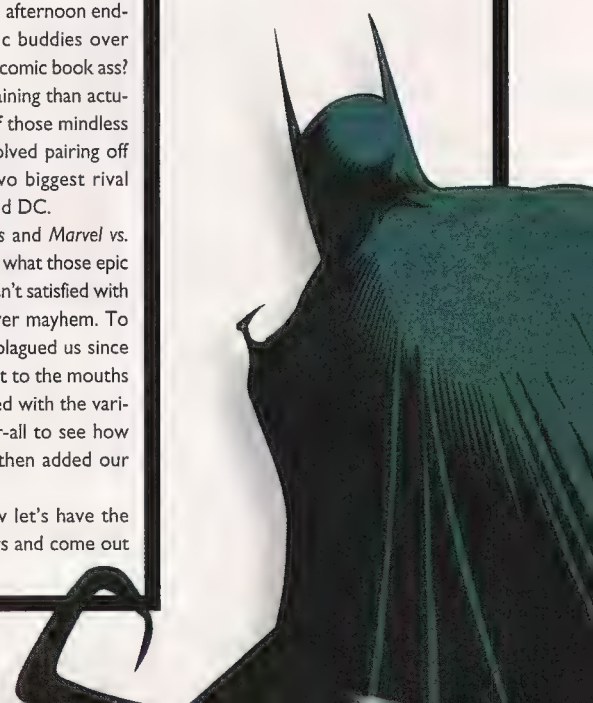
BY CRAIG SHUTT
WITH THE *WIZARD* STAFF

WHO'S STRONGER:
Superman or the Hulk?
WHO'D WIN IN A RACE:
the Flash or Quicksilver?
WHO'S GOT A HAIRIER BACK:
Wolverine or Lobo?

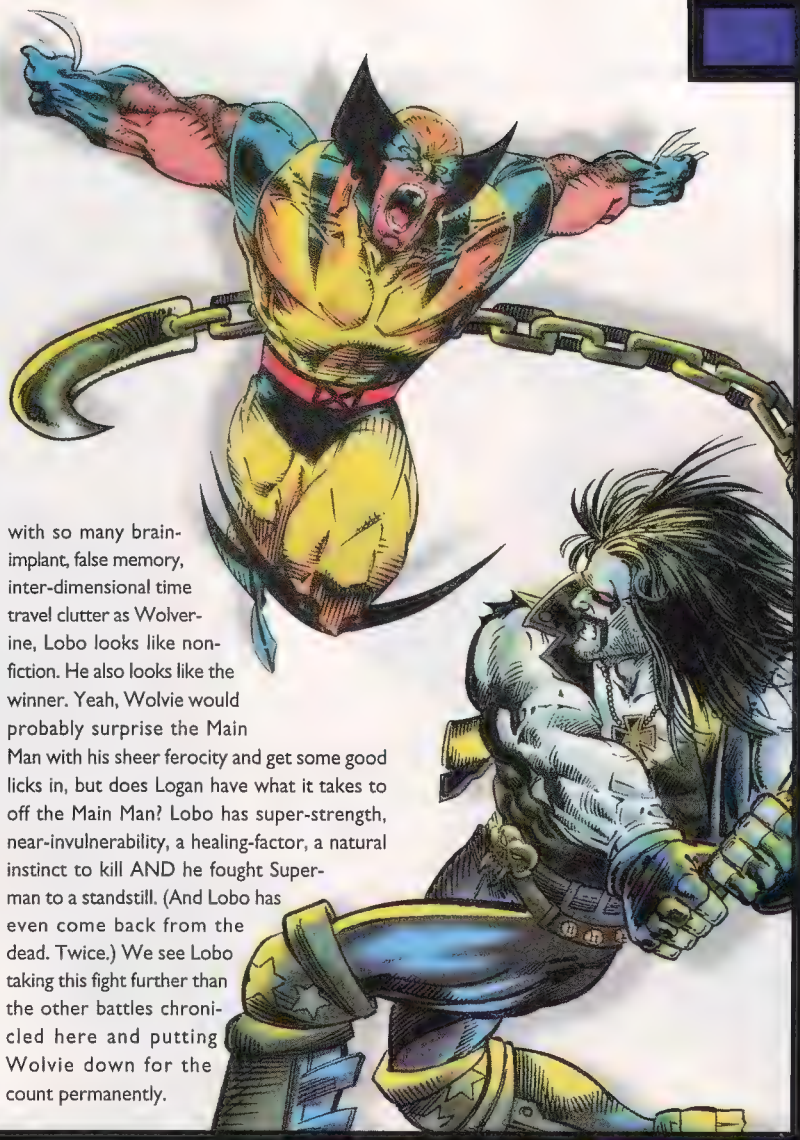
C'mon, who hasn't spent an afternoon endlessly arguing with some comic buddies over who could kick whose fictitious comic book ass? It's the only thing more entertaining than actually reading a good fight. Out of those mindless debates, the best slugfests involved pairing off the counterparts from the two biggest rival superhero universes: Marvel and DC.

While the recent *All Access* and *Marvel vs. DC* mini-series gave us a taste of what those epic battles might be like, *Wizard* wasn't satisfied with those brief glimpses of crossover mayhem. To settle the questions that have plagued us since our childhood, we went straight to the mouths of industry pros most associated with the various combatants in our free-for-all to see how they would call the fight, and then added our own two cents to the mix.

And that's the setup. Now let's have the heroes go back to their corners and come out fighting.



WOLVERINE (WITH ADAMANTIUM) VS LOBO



KEITH GIFFEN: "My only question," says Lobo's co-creator, "is what would you do in the *second* panel? You're talking about a mutant against a force of nature. Lobo is a cypher—Lobo comes, Lobo kills. He took on Superman, and the only reason Superman got out of it was because Lobo was loaded. Based on pure power level and the willingness to exterminate, I'd have to say Lobo takes it hands down. He's a pure, high-octane concept who would be fighting a character who's been fleshed out into something more realistic. Wolverine might contain Lobo, but I doubt very much that in a face-to-face smack match Wolverine could win."

LARRY HAMA: That's where you're wrong, says *Wolverine* writer Hama. "Wolverine would win, because Lobo is just kind of silly. Winning isn't about strength or power, it's about will. And I've always thought Wolverine has an indomitable will. Even if he's reduced to zip, he'll keep on fighting. I don't get that from Lobo. Lobo's a big strong guy with some wisecracks, like some semi-retarded biker who's had three six-packs and wants to duke it out. I don't get the feeling he has the inner strength to get up in the face of total adversity and keep slugging. A fight comes down to what's in the fighters' cores, and that gives it to Wolverine. But I'm kind of partisan."

WIZARD: Lobo is "silly"? Next to a character with so many brain-implant, false memory, inter-dimensional time travel clutter as Wolverine, Lobo looks like non-fiction. He also looks like the winner. Yeah, Wolvie would probably surprise the Main Man with his sheer ferocity and get some good licks in, but does Logan have what it takes to off the Main Man? Lobo has super-strength, near-invulnerability, a healing-factor, a natural instinct to kill AND he fought Superman to a standstill. (And Lobo has even come back from the dead. Twice.) We see Lobo taking this fight further than the other battles chronicled here and putting Wolvie down for the count permanently.

CAPTAIN AMERICA (PRE-"HEROES REBORN") VS BATMAN

CHUCK DIXON: "I'm really torn, because I love Cap," says *Detective Comics* writer Dixon. "But I think Batman would win every time. He'd come up with a way, especially if he had advance warning. If he got in over his head, he'd retreat or escape and find a different approach. Batman isn't going to slug it out with Cap, because Cap can punch a hole in a brick wall. Cap is physically stronger and faster, but Batman is more cerebral and cunning. Given enough time to plan, he could defeat anyone in either universe, even Galactus or Darkseid."

MARK WAID: "This is a tough one," says the former *Captain America* writer. "Much as I love Cap, and as much as I don't give a rat's ass about Batman as a character, I think Batman would clean his clock. He's sneakier and plays dirtier than Cap. Before the fight started, Batman would've set up six traps and he'd have Cap over a barrel in a heartbeat. Cap is a great thinker and a great military strategist, but frankly, Batman is more clever. Cap is many things, but he's not sneaky, and that would win it. It always will. Batman could beat Galactus."

KURT BUSIEK: "Waid is so wrong," counters Kurt Busiek, who researched the entire Marvel Universe for *Marvels*. "Cap is the world's greatest fighting machine. Both Batman and Cap will always find a way to win, so that cancels out. The Red Skull sets all kinds of traps, too, and Cap prevails. Cap would win any fight, because that's what Cap does."

PETER DAVID: "If you want to track down a bad guy, you take Batman," says prolific Marvel and DC writer David. "But if the bad guy is going to stop and make his stand, I'll take Cap. Cap would slice off that utility belt in about two seconds."

WIZARD: Sigh. Yeah, we *know* that Batman is the toughest, hard-as-nails, no-nonsense butt-kicker in town, and nobody beats Batman…except Captain America. Yeah, Bats is sneaky and would probably rig the battleground with all sorts of unpleasantries, but while Batman is the World's Greatest Detective, Cap is the World's Greatest Fighter. This guy's been knee-deep as a soldier/strategist in every situation imaginable. From WWII battlefields to battling otherworldly demi-gods, the one thing Captain America can do better than anyone is to outlast his opponent, turn a situation to his advantage and, regardless of the odds, beat you (that and Cap is enhanced to the pinnacle of human perfection, Batman is just a man). Cap takes it after a drawn-out, every-trick-in-the-book slugfest/cat-and-mouse battle that would leave the super-soldier exhausted, battered and bloody, but more importantly, victorious.

SUPERMAN (FULL POWER) VS HULK (MARVEL UNIVERSE VERSION)

DAN JURGENS: "Superman would win, although the Hulk might be stronger if they were just going to stand and punch," says the man who helped kill and marry (in that order) the Man of Steel. "But otherwise, I don't even think the battle would last that long. Superman simply has a much greater arsenal at his disposal in his sensory powers, flight and super-speed. Even with Banner's intelligence, I don't think it would be much of a problem. The Hulk can maneuver by leaping around, but Superman can fly and would use his speed and heat vision to beat the Hulk in a couple of heartbeats. I don't even think it's a contest."

PETER DAVID: "My heart says the Hulk," laments *The Incredible Hulk* writer. "But my head says Superman." Why does David pick the Man of Steel? "Superman's combination of strength, invulnerability, super speed and heat vision...that's a lot for someone to overcome. It's entirely possible that the Hulk could set a trap for Superman or out-think him in some way, shape or form. And if it's pure strength, the Hulk beats him. But Superman has too many things going for him besides strength.

WIZARD: "Superman smash!" The Hulk is tougher than Superman, but Supes is smarter and would attack from all fronts. Moving with super-speed, landing Superman-packed punches and scorching heat vision, Supes would whittle the Hulk down, grab him, fly up a couple hundred of miles and then hurtle back to Earth at super-speed, letting go at the last second and leaving the Hulk kayoed at the bottom of a crater. And then he'd pants 'im.

HAWKEYE (PRE-"HEROES REBORN") VS GREEN ARROW (OLIVER QUEEN)

KURT BUSIEK: "Hawkeye would win. Hawkeye's main weapon is an arrow that *blows up*! Give me a choice between a sharp-tipped arrow and an arrow with a *grenade* on it, and I know which one I'm betting on! Basically, Green Arrow has found the skill to become the most-accurate marksman on his planet. Hawkeye has used sheer guts, constant training and good old American 'cussedness' to turn himself into an athlete capable of standing next to demi-gods like the Avengers. The bottom line: Hawkeye is more of a do-what-it-takes-to-make-it-happen kinda guy."

MIKE GRELL: Au contraire, Pierre, says former longtime *Green Arrow* writer Grell. "I'm pretty partial to my guy. I'm a big believer that age and treachery will always win out over youth and enthusiasm. Ollie's been around the block enough times to have a dirty trick or two up his sleeve, and he's got big sleeves—or at least he did when he was alive." But what about those grenade arrows of Hawkeye's? "I can't help it if Hawkeye has been rummaging through Ollie's trash can. The bottom line is Ollie would fight dirty and win."

WIZARD: Paint the ol' bullseye on Ollie 'cause Hawk's takin' this one home. Putting aside the fact that Hawkeye has single-handedly defeated one of the Elders of the Universe (the Collector was as surprised about that as readers), we'd have to admit that both GA and Hawk are pretty even as marksmen. But Hawkeye, with his extensive arsenal of sonic, acid and explosive arrows, would bring the house down on top of Ollie. Even if GA escaped the cave-in and got the jump on our boy Hawkeye, Hawk's been trained in hand-to-hand combat by Captain America, meaning either way you slice it, Ollie is going down.

QUICKSILVER VS FLASH

MARK WAID: "Fat chance you'll find anyone who will tell me that Quicksilver wins over the Flash," says the *Flash* scribe, derision dripping from every word. "Flash is 100,000 times faster than Quicksilver! Flash would beat him 20,000 times before he even noticed he was beaten! Before Quicksilver could blink, Flash would whip up one of those miniature tornadoes and bounce him around like a ping-pong ball in a fountain until he was unconscious or threw up. Quicksilver's only chance would be to call in his sister Wanda [the Scarlet Witch] and have her alter the laws of probability so incredibly far that he could actually sneak up on the Flash some way."

PETER DAVID: Waid won't get any argument from the man who scripted the Flash/Quicksilver battle in *Marvel vs. DC* #2, which Flash won. "It's gotta be the Flash," he says. "He's a pretty tough customer." Quicksilver nearly won that fight, David admits, but he lost when he hesitated about taking advantage of a weakened Flash...and then Flash lowered the boom. "I worked pretty hard to make it as even as possible and make the fight seesaw, because otherwise the Flash is just too fast to lose. Super-speed is one of the two powers [along with invisibility] that just drives me nuts. If someone genuinely has super-speed, the fight would be over before the other person knew the guy was there. Flash would be tough for *anyone* to beat."

WIZARD: Sorry, but we blinked and missed it. But judging by Quicksilver's body laying on the floor (and that "Wha...?!?" look on his kisser), we'd have to give this one to the Flash in a heartbeat. Literally.

SHE-HULK VS WONDER WOMAN

JOHN BYRNE: "I've always been inclined to pick She-Hulk simply on a power level," says Byrne, who once wrote and drew *She-Hulk* and currently chronicles *Wonder Woman*. "Certainly, She-Hulk is stronger than the version of Wonder Woman that we've seen so far. But I'm going to be using the concept George introduced that she's 'as strong as the Earth' to give her an almost infinite amount of strength to draw on as she needs it. We haven't seen that yet, so it's probably not fair to your readers to use it. So I'd go with She-Hulk. Ultimately…I dunno, it's a tough choice. I see them facing off and just standing there not moving the other an inch, in a standoff. But in the back of my little pea brain, I think She-Hulk would win."

GEORGE PÉREZ: "Diana has the advantage," says the man who revamped *Wonder Woman* in 1986. "She has more than just strength going for her, especially if she's got her lasso. That pretty much ends

DAREDEVIL VS BATMAN

CHUCK DIXON: "Batman fighting Daredevil is a snap," says Batman's writer. "It would take no time at all. He'd watch Daredevil for about five minutes and say, 'Hey, this guy's blind!' Then he'd figure out a way through sound or something else in his vast array of electronic gear to beat him, maybe screw with his inner ear or something." What if DD used that old ploy of turning out the lights? "Batman in the dark is at no disadvantage, because he has all kinds of light-intensification gear in his cowl. He can see as well in pitch blackness as he can in daylight. DD can work in the dark and he's an incredible acrobat and a terrific martial artist and all that jazz, but Batman wouldn't have a problem. He'd set up some distraction for DD's senses and then pummel the crap out of him."

KARL KESEL: "Much as I hate to say it," says current *Daredevil* writer, "Batman would win. DD is a little closer to street level than Batman, a little more like the average guy who puts on a costume and does what he can. DD has heightened senses, but Batman is tougher because he's obsessed; he's got way more intensity. He's like a force of nature. I enjoy heroes with feet of clay, and that's Daredevil. Batman's got all that gadgetry, and all Daredevil has is his billy club! Daredevil's clever and resourceful enough that he might be able to make it a draw, but given a long, drawn-out battle, I'm pretty sure Batman is going to win. I wish I could say it was different, but if I were betting, I'd go against my own guy."

WIZARD: "Holy beat-the-guy-in-red-tights, Batman!" Dixon hit the nail on the head. After a few minutes of punch, block, kick, block, etc., Bats would figure out ol' horn-head is blind. As soon as that happened, Bats would find a way to screw with his radar sense or overload his enhanced senses and—BAM!—Daredevil'll be down for the count.

the She-Hulk's chances right there! Plus, she's faster than Hermes and has the advantage of flight, and she was trained as a warrior. In sheer strength, they'd probably go toe to toe, but Diana is more than brute strength, and that's all She-Hulk has. The only advantage She-Hulk has is that Diana won't attack with a closed fist unless she knows the opponent can *take* a closed fist. That hesitancy for the first strike might be a problem for her. She-Hulk's only chance is to hit first and stun Diana enough to follow through before Diana could defend herself."

WIZARD: Cat-fight! Cat-fight! Put these two in a Jell-O-filled ring and you could charge double the cover price! It wouldn't change things, though. As tough as She-Hulk is, Wonder Woman is tougher. She's easily as strong, but the reasons that tip the scale in the Amazon's favor are threefold. First, she's faster. For every blow that Shulkie gets through, Diana'd get three. Second, WW can fly. That's a huge factor in maneuverability and sneak attacks. And finally, Wonder Woman was trained as a warrior. She knows how to spot their weaknesses, how to "take" a shot and land the important blows that'll cripple your opponent. It may take a while, but Wonder Woman would come out on top.

SILVER SURFER VS GREEN LANTERN

RON MARZ: "It would come out just like it did in *Marvel vs. DC*," says the current *Green Lantern* and former *Silver Surfer* writer. "The Surfer would kick Green Lantern's ass. Green Lantern has one of the most powerful weapons in the universe at his command, but the Surfer *is* one of the most powerful weapons in the universe. I always portrayed him as a god with a human soul. He's also a lot more experienced than Kyle Rayner." What if it were the more-experienced Hal Jordan? "First of all, Hal's dead and he's going to stay dead, so it's moot. And second, his inclination would be to make a giant boxing glove, so I'd still put my money on the Surfer." What if it was Jordan as Parallax, the cosmic psycho? "He'd give the Surfer a better fight than either Green Lantern, since we wrote him as a bottomless pit of energy."

JIM STARLIN: The former *Silver Surfer* writer disagrees that it's not quite so clear-cut. "Green Lantern owns Aladdin's lamp," he argues. "He's got a ring that essentially makes any wish come true. Particularly, if he doesn't have that weakness to yellow any more, I'd have to go with Green Lantern. I always thought the Silver Surfer had his limits, whereas the ring doesn't. Green Lantern is so powerful, and that's the problem with writing that character. At this point, if they've gotten rid of that yellow thing and the need to recharge the ring every 24 hours, he'd be hell to write! Now, if you

AQUAMAN VS NAMOR

THE SUB-MARINER (PRE-"HEROES REBORN")

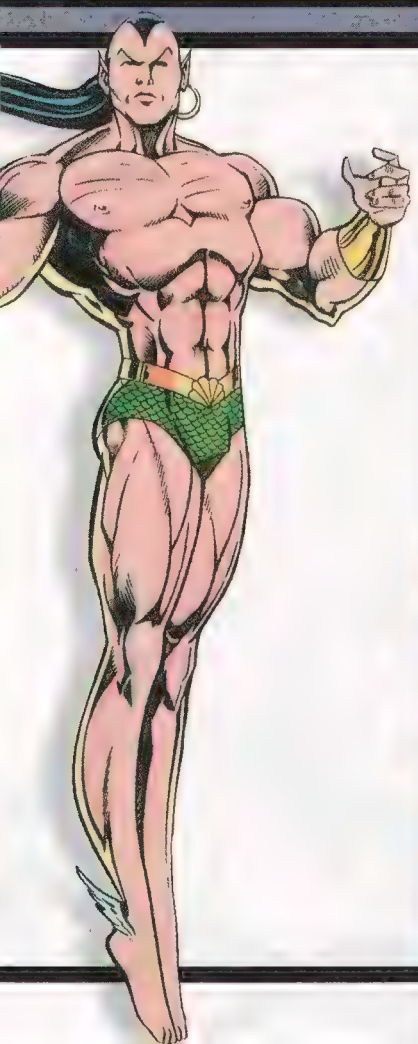
PETER DAVID: Says the *Aquaman* writer, "Namor is probably stronger, but I think he's so frickin' arrogant that Aquaman would out-think him and use cunning to beat him. Aquaman wouldn't be at a disadvantage on land, because we've pretty much done away with that one-hour limitation [before needing sea water]." But what about the Sub-Mariner's flying ability? "Hey, let him flap around as much as he wants, so what? If he drops Aquaman, Aquaman can swing around with his harpoon cable. Namor's problem would be when he gets close, he's in range of the harpoon, and it can be really nasty. Aquaman would probably hack those little wings right off Namor's ankles. That would *have* to sting. I also think Aquaman's mental control is better. We're building it up in the series to showing it's more powerful than Aquaman has realized."

JOHN BYRNE: "Namor is stronger, tougher and meaner," says the former *Namor the Sub-Mariner* writer/artist. "His flying ability would let him strike from a distance, and I always give the advantage to the person who can do that." But what about chopping off those little wing things so he can't fly? "The wings don't make him fly, they're used for maneuvering and are a manifestation of his ability to fly. They'd have to flap like [crazy] to make him fly! The harpoon wouldn't be a problem because it would bounce off Namor's skin—certainly the Namor *I* dealt with was bullet-proof." So what about using fish to beat him as was done in *Marvel vs. DC #2*? "That struck me as vaguely silly when I heard about it. It would take more than that to beat Namor."

WIZARD: This would be a neat fight, but we gotta give it to Namor. With Aquaman's new mind-control ability it would be close, but when Artie tries to screw with Subby's mind, hoo-boy, watch out. We've all seen what happens when Namor loses his cool. This Prozac poster boy single-handedly takes on the Fantastic Four, goes toe-to-toe with Hercules and levels whatever's standing next to him, all the while screaming "Imperius Rex!" We see Subby taking a tremendous amount of punishment from Aquaman and just when Namor looks finished, that's when his temper flares outta control, burns through any mind-control crap, pummels through any sea-creature defenses brought to bear and ultimately leaves a certain blond-haired King of Atlantis sucking seawater.

want to go back to the original Jack Kirby version of the Surfer, then I think he'd kick Green Lantern's ass. But the later one I was writing and today's seems to be pretty well cooked down from that."

WIZARD: "To me my board...and run over that green guy's unconscious body while you're at it." C'mon, this one is no contest. Kyle's human, while the shiny silver guy is *power incarnate*. The Surfer can fly through stars, rearrange molecules, survive nuclear explosions...and heck, the Surfer's got years of experience on this new, still fairly—ahem—*green* Green Lantern. While Kyle might get a few good shots in, say, in the form of a giant drill press, Surfer's patented "power cosmic" would overwhelm the ring's energies, batter GL from every angle, and, when Kyle eventually regains consciousness, the Surfer would offer him some aspirin and say, "See my friend? We should discuss our differences, not fight because of them." Arrogant snot.



SUPERMAN (FULL POWER) (PRE-"HEROES REBORN") VS THOR

WALT SIMONSON: "Any kind of fight like that between relatively evenly matched opponents—and I would say that's true of Superman and Thor—is clearly going to be one at the discretion of the writer," says the former *Thor* writer/artist. "But given in a sense that Thor is a magical being, and magic is one of the two things that Superman is susceptible to, I would probably tilt a little in favor of Thor. On the other hand, Superman is *unbelievably* powerful. In a knockdown, drag-out fight, if he can avoid getting clocked by the hammer, that might make the difference. If anything gave Thor an edge, it would be magic. If anything gave Superman an edge, it would probably be his intelligence and speed. But hey, I'm prejudiced. I wrote *Thor*. I think Thor would win."

LOUISE SIMONSON: The current *Superman: The Man of Steel* writer disagrees with her husband. "Okay, see, the quote on the hammer is 'If he be worthy.' I think there's no guy worthier than Superman. Heck, he picks up the hammer, he's got the Thor power himself. I think that once he's got the Thor power, Thor doesn't stand a chance. Superman picks up Thor's hammer, he has the power of Thor *and* the power of Superman as well. He whups Thor's ass." But what if he doesn't pick up the hammer? "He's a very, very bright guy and he'd figure it out pretty fast. He has this kind of vision that you can read all sorts of microscopic lettering on the side of hammers and stuff. He'd check it out."

WIZARD: "I say thee Nay!" While we gave the Supes/Hulk match to the big "S," this time we tip our helmet to the Thunder God. Think about it. Aside from his super-strength, invulnerability and the fact he'll be smacking you with his hammer, Thor can control the weather (betcha even Supes will feel that 143rd lightning bolt—see *Kingdom Come* #4) *and* he's a Viking warrior! This guy's been duking it out hand-to-hand for centuries with villains, monsters...heck, with other Gods! This is one super-type who truly understands the art of battle. Yeah, it'd be the second toughest fight of his life (see the Ragnarok storyline in *Thor* #337-#355 for the toughest), but there's not much question about it: Thor leaves Supes flat on his back. W

Chicago-based writer Craig Shutt, when properly tanked-up on horse tranquilizers, feels no pain and can kick anybody's ass.

Basic Training

this month's host: Jim Calafiore

How to Draw Metallic Surfaces

Metal. Along with spandex and leather, it's an important texture within the world of comics. Take it away, and a lot of superheroes would be running around empty-handed, half-naked or missing an appendage or two (or six or seven). And a solid one-third of today's characters probably wouldn't exist at all.

If most superheroes can't live without metal, it's up to us to supply them with it—and supply it convincingly. Unfortunately, polished metal can't be graphically represented as it really exists, reflecting everything around it like a tinted mirror. That just won't work in panel-to-panel comics (except for specific effect shots, like a face reflected in a shield). So we cheat. We rely on areas of light, shading and highlights to simulate the effect well enough so readers see it as metal. Which isn't all that easy, either…

Have a Ball

FIG. 1

A good place to start is with a simple exercise using a chrome sphere. In fig. 1, we divide the sphere with a strong black line across its equator, designating the top half as reflecting "light," and the bottom half as "shadow." By moving the light source, we can change the areas of light and shadow. The light source in fig. 2 is now behind the sphere, back-lighting it, which creates a large shadowed area. Fig. 3 brings the light source to "our" side of the sphere, expanding the reflected light area. In fig. 4, the light has moved to about 10 o'clock. Note how the upper edge of the shaded area curves to the shape of the sphere differently as it changes position.

FIG. 2

FIG. 3

FIG. 4

There are two important points here: First, always be aware of and stay consistent with light sources. Second, perceive the sphere as a three-dimensional shape, not just as a circle. To interpret how light plays across an object, you have to think of the object as occupying space in the real world, especially when dealing with something like the geometric shapes of bulky armor plating.

Keep Your Plates Clean

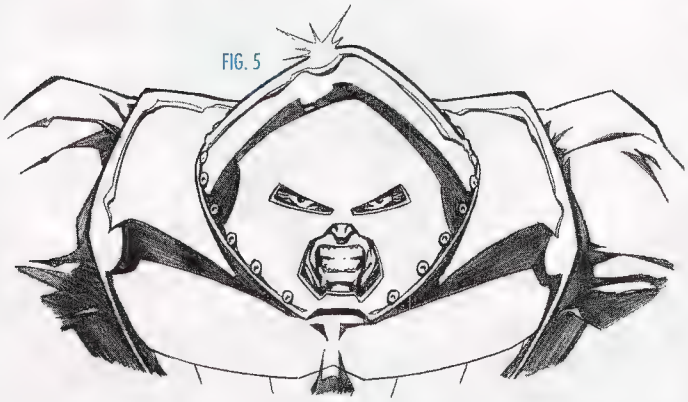


FIG. 5

Here are two good examples of armor plating. Juggernaut's simple armor (fig. 5) is great to draw, especially that bullet helmet. Bulky armor is basically made up of smooth geometric shapes and requires simple shapes in the rendering. On Juggy, I've used a back-light similar to fig. 2, and separated the light from shadow with strong, clean black shading. Although I highlighted the upper edge of his helmet and shoulders with a more loose "reflection" line, the overall shading is kept very simple. (I usually render the shadowed area in black, but I left it open on Juggy for a mood effect.)

The War Machine armor (fig. 6) might seem much more difficult to interpret than Juggy's, but if you concentrate on its parts rather than the whole, it's not. Most bulk armor can be broken down into various geometric shapes: the semi-circle of the shoulder pad, the vertical walls of the octagonal collar, the half-sphere of the ear cap, the squareness of the chest plates, etc. With a consistent light source, each item can be rendered to its particular dimensions, affected somewhat by the other components in contact with or near it. (I'll show you how to handle those "drop-shadows" a little later in this column.)

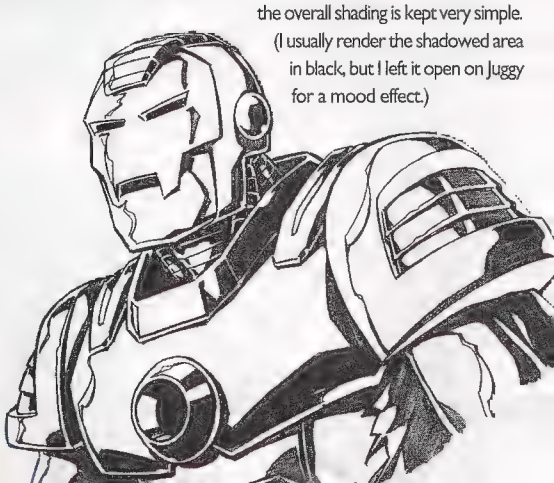
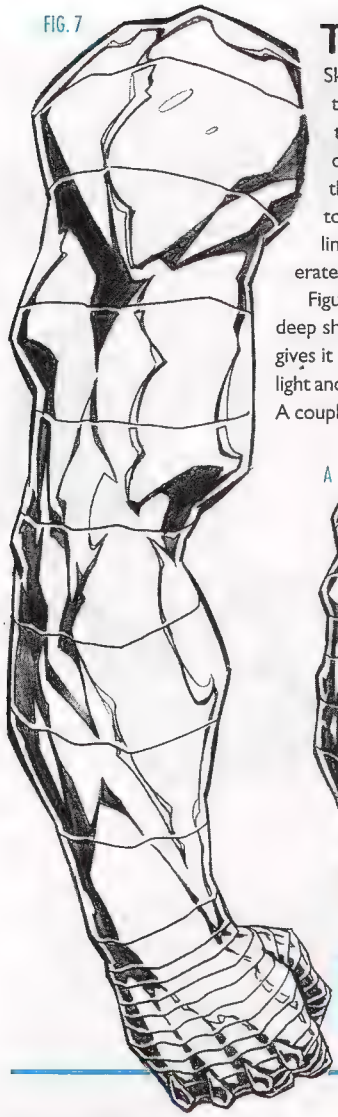


FIG. 6

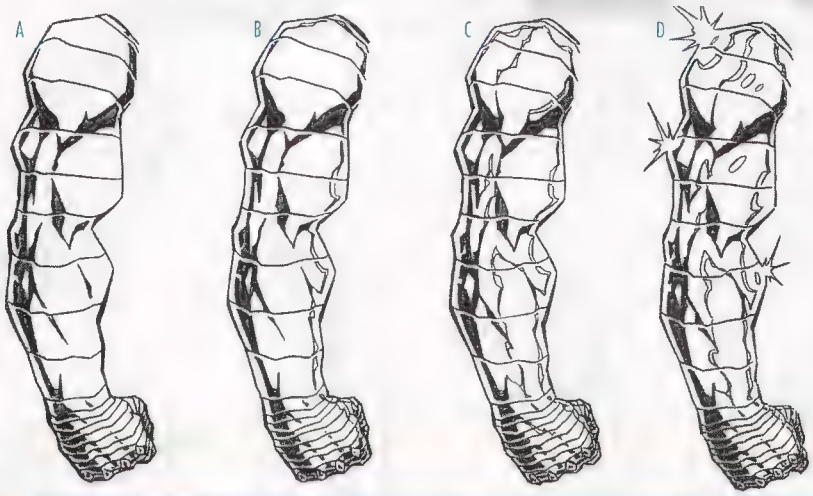
FIG. 7



To Arms!

Skintight metal presents specifically different problems, most of which depend on a good knowledge of the underlying structure (bone, muscle, etc.), since that's what influences the reflective patterns. With this right arm, I first chose a light source (on "our side" of the arm, at about 2 o'clock), which led to define the areas of deep shadow created by the muscle forms. I then added reflection lines, delineating the reflected light source to the arm's right side. For internal highlighting, I used some doubled linework to follow and accentuate the dramatic way in which the irregular musculature catches the light. The linework on skintight metal can have more life and flair to it, but be careful not to go too crazy and obliterate the structure underneath.

Figures A-D illustrate varying degrees of shine. For a dull, unpolished look (fig. A), shade only the areas of deep shadow, leaving the rest unhighlighted. A single highlight line along the opposite edge of the arm (fig. B) gives it an instant soft polish. Fig. C is highly polished where every curve and indentation picks up shadow and light and reflects it back. I usually reserve a sparkling polish (fig. D) for otherworldly or fresh-off-the-rack armor. A couple of starbursts off the edges, and a few small ovals of a reflected light source, make for super-shininess.



Also of note here is that these arms are sheathed in banded metal. By leaving a small gap in the shading at the bottom of each band, I've accented the fact that all this metal is layered and pieced together.

Metal Men

Metal as skin, for characters like the Silver Surfer (fig. 8), doesn't present any new problems, except you need to express more of an overall fluidity. Taking an isolation of the Surfer's right arm (at right) and comparing it with the previous section's arms, you can see they're pretty similar, except for a bit more delineation of the muscle structure of Surfer's arm to make it feel tighter than just a metal sheath. This effect can be pushed even further, to the point where each muscle is its own bundle of metal—each shiny muscle distinctly separated from the other by hard outlines (Colossus' metal form, for example). This again demands a strong knowledge of the muscle structures involved.

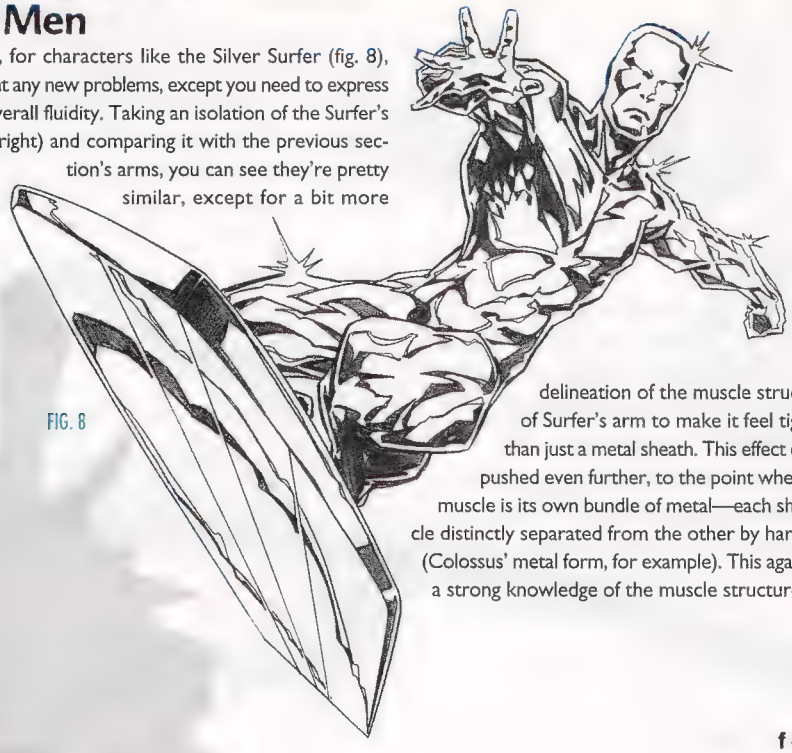


FIG. 8

FIG. 9

Metal Lives!

Here are some quick techniques that let your metal exist in real three-dimensional space. Referring back to the previous examples, you can see I've been using these tricks all along.

Drop-Shadows

Using War Machine's left arm (fig. 10), I've shaded the individual components (shoulder pad, arm and gauntlet) as if they weren't connected to each other. Each part has its own shape, but as a whole, it's pretty flat. In fig. 11, I've made the effort to consider how each component affects the other. The gauntlet casts a shadow across the forearm, as the shoulder pad does across the biceps. Comparing the two, the whole illustration "pops" out considerably more in fig. 11.

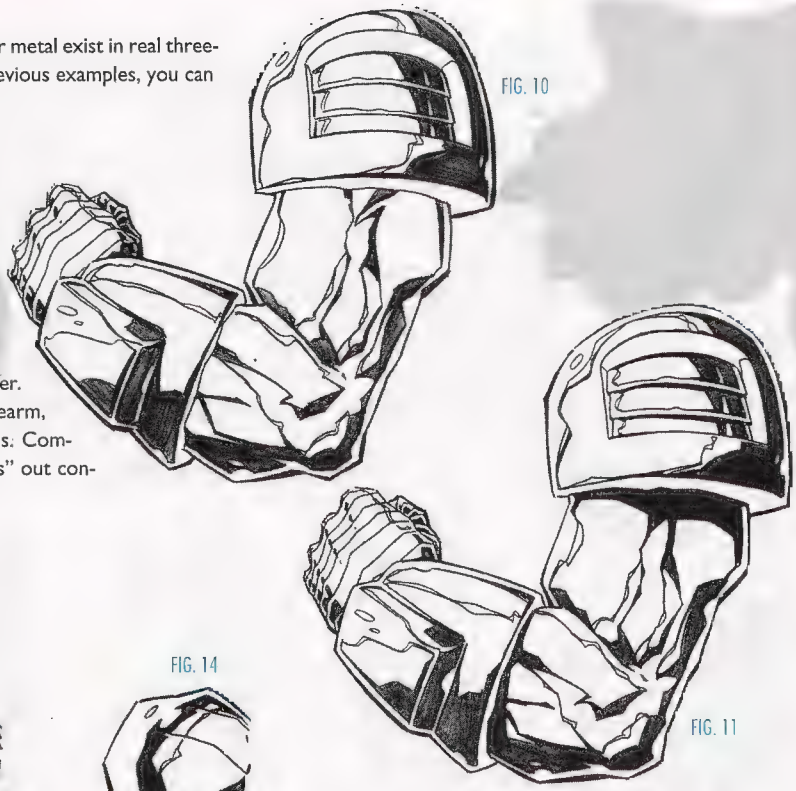


FIG. 10

FIG. 11

FIG. 12

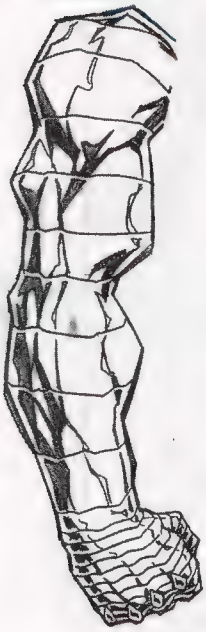


FIG. 13

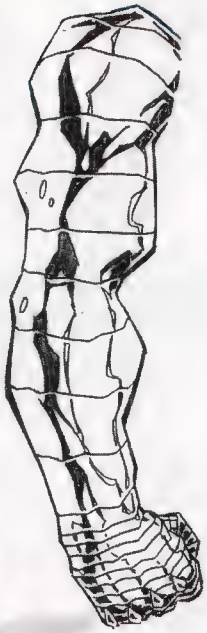
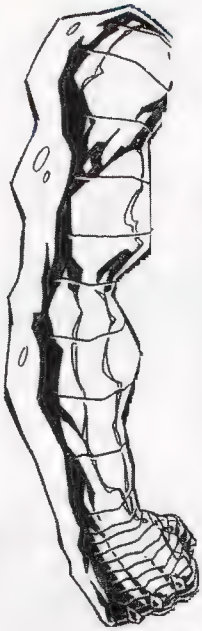


FIG. 14



Halos

Leaving a thin margin of white (known as a halo) between the shading and the outline of the arm (fig. 12) is the simplest way to imply a reflective surface. The halos can be altered for different effects. Increasing the depth of the halo (fig. 13) indicates a strong secondary light source. To increase it to an *extremely* bright secondary light source, I removed any detail from the haloed area in fig. 14. Save this one for special moments.

Grungy Metal

Rust is surprisingly easy to depict. Using a banded metal hose, I started by shading its surface as "dull," just like I showed you back in the "arms" section. (Note again how the shading follows a definite light source, changing as the angle of the hose shifts.) Then I just had fun mucking it up as much as I wanted, starting with the hose fairly clean at one end and getting progressively worse as I worked my way to the other.

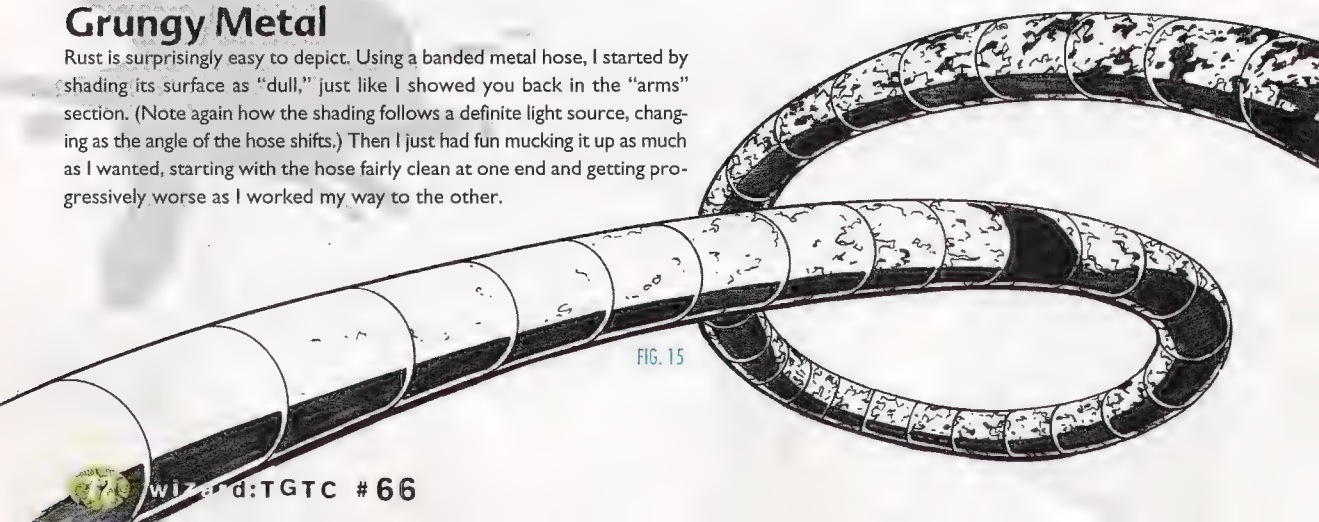


FIG. 15

Iron Out the Kinks

Basically everything we've discussed so far can be seen here in this Iron Man illustration. (I drew this armor in *Iron Man* #325.)

I've established a strong light source with the repulsor blast, and let it play out along the various forms: the bulk armor of the helmet, chest plate and gauntlets, and the form-fitting metal on his legs, torso and arms (banded around the biceps and thighs). The simpler shading of the armor plating separates it from the looser, more fluid rendering on the skintight metal. The drop-shadows push the overlapping armor forward, especially the extreme shadow filling behind the helmet and along the shoulder, which allows the helmet to thrust forward convincingly.

I've played with some of the loose reflective highlights (mostly along the skintight metal, but also across the helmet), adding a few oval "points" of reflected light for spice. I stayed away from any sparkles, though, since Iron Man's armor always looked best to me when it wasn't off-the-shelf dazzling.

FIG. 16

Bring Me More Weapons!

Finally, what superhero isn't lost without his accessories? Captain America's shield is a perfect example of shallow domes, which have their own unique system of shadows and reflections. Both the shaded and highlighted areas tend to radiate out from the center. I've overexaggerated the effect here for demonstration purposes.

I can just about draw Aquaman's harpoon in my sleep. (That's only 'cause I've been drawing *Aquaman* for a couple o' years.) Take note of the shadows and sharp edges.

And guns are always fun. Plus, they're easier to render in metal than you'd think. Like the War Machine armor, just about any gun can be broken down into its separate geometric shapes. Simply pick a light source and go to town.

FIG. 17

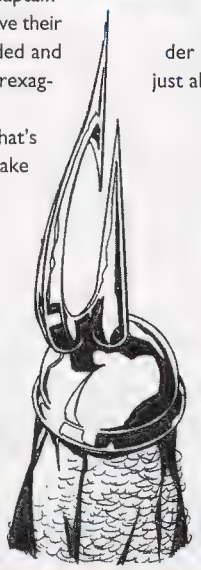


FIG. 18

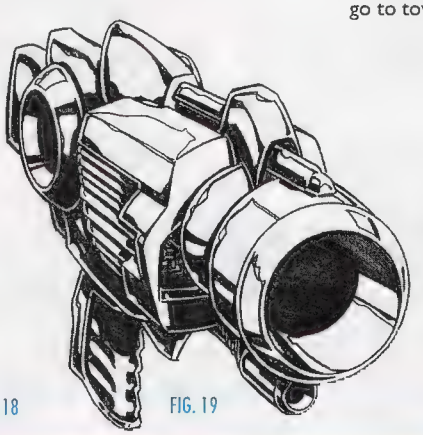


FIG. 19

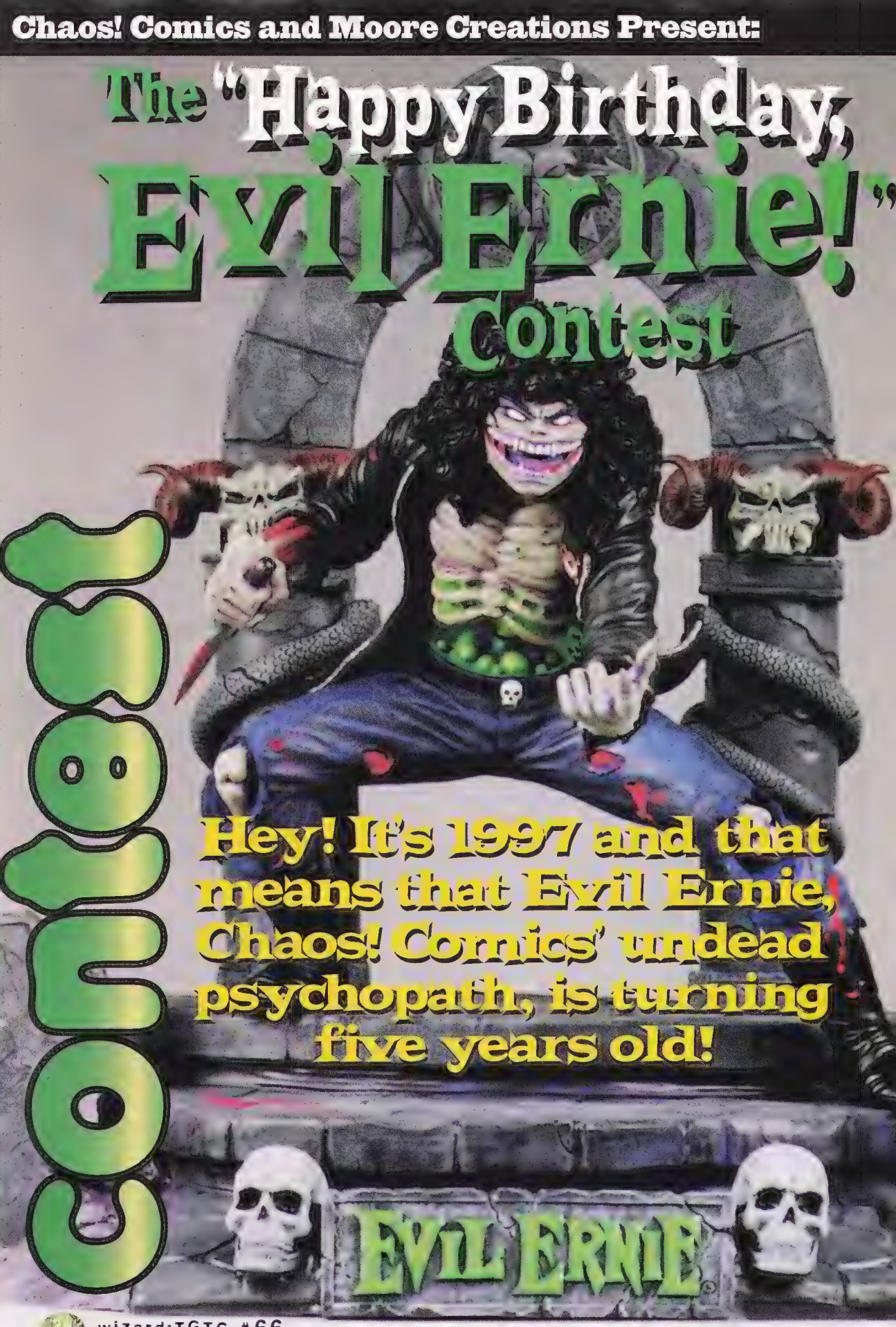
Metal technique varies from artist to artist. Mine is definitely not the only way to handle metal, but it is the style that I find works best for me. If any of the above tips strikes a chord with you, take it and make it part of your style. That's what it's all really about, finding various styles and techniques you connect with and molding the influences into your own style.

Anyway, it looks like I've reached the bottom of the last page, which means I'm out of space. I hope these tips help. Thanks for reading.

Jim Calafiore, whose metal work can now be seen regularly in the monthly pages of Aquaman, *is a true metalhead. He can mosh with the best of 'em.*

Chaos! Comics and Moore Creations Present:

The "Happy Birthday, Evil Ernie!" Contest



Hey! It's 1997 and that means that Evil Ernie, Chaos! Comics' undead psychopath, is turning five years old!

It's a year-long party, and you can win the present!

How To Play

We want cake. Either bake one and send a photo (as well as the recipe!) or, if you're not too hot with a spatula, draw us a birthday cake.

There will be a winner in each category, but only to the two individuals who whip up the most unpleasant, evil and downright disturbing birthday cake this side of a decomposing harbinger of the apocalypse. And what do you get for your troubles?

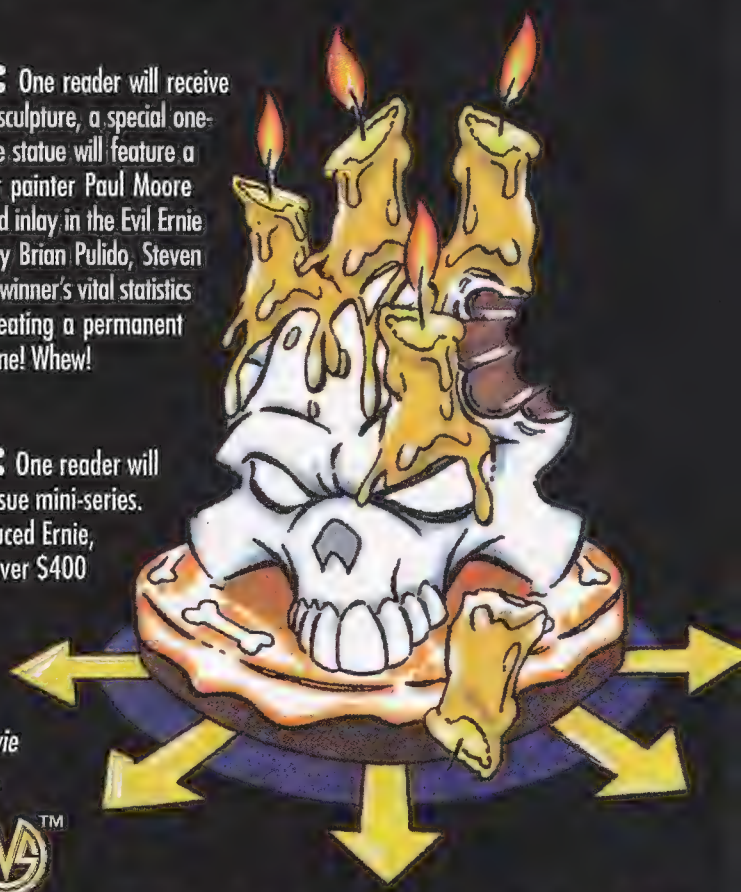
BAKING CATEGORY

Grand Prize (1): One reader will receive the Evil Ernie "Omega Edition" Clayburn Moore resin sculpture, a special one-of-a-kind Chaos! creation! This one-and-only Evil Ernie statue will feature a hyper-detailed paint job by Moore Creations master painter Paul Moore (featuring additional splatter effects), a custom emerald inlay in the Evil Ernie logo, and a special certificate of authenticity signed by Brian Pulido, Steven Hughes, Clayburn Moore and Paul Moore! Further, the winner's vital statistics will be recorded in the National Chaos! Registry, creating a permanent record that this "Omega Edition" is yours and yours alone! Whew!

DRAWING CATEGORY

Grand Prize (1): One reader will receive the original Eternity Comics *Evil Ernie* five-issue mini-series. That's right, kemosabe. That's the series that introduced Ernie, Lady Death and the whole Chaos! Universe. That's over $400 worth of evil, partner.

Random (20): Twenty readers, selected at random from all entries, will get a copy of the brand-new *Evil Ernie Versus The Movie Monsters* autographed by creator/writer Brian Pulido.



This contest is sponsored by Chaos! Comics and Moore Creations, producers of fine party favors.

MOORE CREATIONS™

CHAOS!® COMICS

Fill this sucker out, attach it to your entry, put it in an envelope and send it off to: Happy Birthday Evil Ernie Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. Deadline is February 28, 1997.

Happy Legal Birthday

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, Chaos! Comics, Moore Creations, their immediate families or Julia Child. Is she like....y'know, a guy? Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip and telephone number with area code on the official entry form or a 3-by-5-inch index card and attach your entry. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry separately to: Happy Birthday, Evil Ernie! Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted, but you can photocopy the entry form before filling it out if you don't want to mess up your magazine. All entries become property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes will be offered. Prizes are awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. Anyone sneaking Ex-Lax into their cake in an evil attempt to make a friend poop like a goose will be disqualified. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by February 28, 1997.** Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Prize winners will be selected based on quality and creativity by Wizard Press and Chaos! Comics. Judging will take place on March 17, 1997.

For a list of winners, available after March 17, 1997, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Happy Birthday, Evil Ernie! Winners, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

Evil Ernie Entry Form

DEADLINE IS FEBRUARY 28, 1997!

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number (with area code) _____

Did you attach your entry?

JUNK DRAWER

Little bits of everything in the world of comic-related merchandise

by David Borak and the *Wizard* Staff

A LITTLE EXPENSIVE FOR A STORMTROOPER

Lucasfilm and Party Professionals have joined forces (sorry, couldn't resist) to help you spend that college-money: a life-size prop replica of a Star Wars Stormtrooper, standing 6' 2" tall and made entirely out of fiberglass! The best part is that he comes with a full-size blaster in his hands! Better start saving those pennies, though, Party Professionals is limiting this baby to only 500 copies with a retail price of around $5,000. Each Stormtrooper is hand-painted and comes fully assembled on a metal base that contains a plaque with the name and number of the piece. Plus, he's sculpted from the Lucasfilm archives to make him look as close to the real thing as you can get. And just think, he'd make the perfect bookend to the life-size Han Solo in Carbonite we spotlighted in last month's "Junk Drawer."

Stormtrooper Prop Replica

Classic Marvel Tie

MARVEL TIES THE KNOT

Big interview today? Wanna impress the guys at the office? Looking for something to match that lime green leisure suit? Marvel Comics enhances your wardrobe with a series of Ralph Marlin ties that are guaranteed to make you look like a fanboy no matter what else you're wearing! Look for silk ties featuring Captain America and Spider-Man (two versions of Spidey: one with him dodging lasers and the other with lotsa webs). Also look for a silk tie featuring tons of classic Marvel covers. And keep an eye out for polyester ties featuring Dr. Doom, Venom and Wolverine. These ties will be available in clothing stores (especially specialty tie shops) everywhere for $16.99 each.

DRAWING HEROES THE MARVEL WAY

So you want to be a high-paid comic book artist? Well, no matter your current skill level, Marvel Comics'll get you started with *Draw the Marvel Comics Super Heroes.* Produced and published by Klutz Press, the book provides step-by-step instructions on how to draw characters like Spider-Man, the Hulk, Thor and the X-Men. A drawing pencil, four colored markers, tracing paper and the tips you'll need for drawing are all included. It's currently available in retail book stores everywhere for only $12.95.

BREAKING INTO THE BIZ

Okay, so you can't draw, you can't ink, you can't write and you can't even letter. But you still want to get into the comics business, right? You can read, can't ya? Good, 'cause Blue Line Comic Book Art Products can help with its new book by Daniel Souder, *Blue Line: A Guide to the Comic Book Business.* This handy guide, available in February for $12.95, provides background on the comics industry in general and offers proven methods for succeeding in comics—everything from creating your own comics and small press publishing to promotions and the business management side of the industry (tie not included). If you've ever looked at Gareb Shamus and said, "Hey, even I could do that!" this book is for you. Look for it in bookstores everywhere.

Draw the Marvel Comics Super Heroes

Starman Watch

STAR WATCHING

Y'know, there really hasn't been too much merchandise out there for *Starman* fans...until now! DC Comics' new Starman Zodiac Watch provides a great-looking time piece with the distinctive Starman logo on the watch face—it's the same symbol featured on the back of Jack Knight's leather jacket. This limited-edition watch will be available at the end of February in specialty comic book stores everywhere for $39.95.

ASSIMILATE THIS!

Just in time to ride the wave of "Star Trek: First Contact" merchandise, Legends in 3-Dimensions brings you a Next Generation retro cold-cast porcelain sculpture of everybody's favorite assimilated Starfleet captain: Locutus of Borg! The 9"-tall bust features Captain Picard in all his mechanized glory, limited to just 5,000 pieces. Each bust is individually numbered and comes with a Certificate of Authenticity signed by Michael Westore, director of make-up for "Star Trek: TNG," as well as the bust's artist, Greg Aronowitz. Look for it in specialty stores everywhere for $149.

Locutus Bust

MAGNETIC CHEESE?!?

If you've got bad dairy products *inside* your refrigerator, just wait'll you see what's now available for the outside of your fridge! Creator Evan Dorkin and Graphitti Designs bring you the Milk and Cheese Magnet Set #1 featuring three nifty magnets to liven up your barren metal door. Those booze-guzzling, carnage-causing, infinitely lovable characters come in full color with brand new artwork by Dorkin himself. The magnet set ships to comic stores everywhere in January for just $6.95.

Milk and Cheese Magnets

BIG GUY, BIG BOOK

Looking for more stuff by that Geof Darrow fella? Aren't we all. Dark Horse Comics can provide you with your Darrow fix in an even BIGGER format with *The Art of the Big Guy and Rusty the Boy Robot*. Darrow won an Eisner award for his artwork on the 1995 hit mini-series *The Big Guy and Rusty the Boy Robot* (collaboratin' with Frank Miller, o' course). Dark Horse has republished the entire series *sans* the dialogue in an even larger format...and those were some pretty big comics to begin with! At 11 3/4" by 15 3/4", *The Art of the Big Guy and Rusty the Boy Robot* is 25% larger than the original comics. (Try bagging and boardin' this sucker!) In addition to the 65 pages of the original series, the book also includes some rarely seen Darrow artwork and arrives in January as a softcover trade paperback for $29.95.

RETURN OF THE MASK

That wacky green-faced Mask is back and this time he's just

Product of the Month

STRANGE MAGIC

The coolest product to emerge this month came from a toy company! Toy Biz, maker of all-action figures Marvel related, has launched an all-new franchise based on the Sorcerer Supreme, Dr. Strange! Look for Dr. Strange Presents: Marvel Magic in toy stores everywhere. Each magic trick retails for just $4.99 and features Marvel's finest characters. The series' first-time up includes Web Climbing Spider-Man, Slashing Sentinel, Web Swinging Spider-Man, the Incredible Hulk Transformation Tunnel, X-Men Teleporting Blackbird Jet and the Fantastic Foes Chamber. Each Marvel Magic trick needs no batteries and requires very little assembly. Impress your friends with simple sleight of hand tricks—great for both kids and adults!

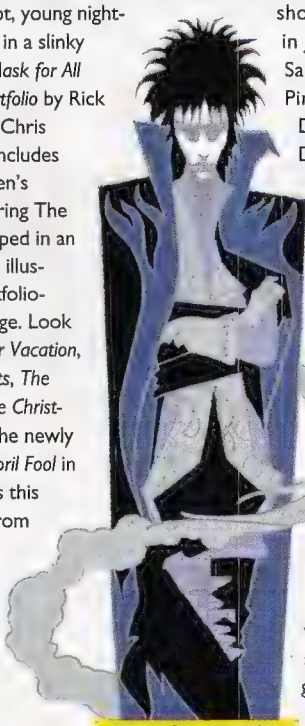
(Action figure not included)

A Mask Story Collection

for kids! When Stanley Ipkiss' young nephew Ned gets a hold of that kooky mask, you can bet there'll be trouble! (And probably *not* a hot, young night-club singer in a slinky dress). *A Mask for All Seasons Portfolio* by Rick Geary and Chris Chalenor includes four children's books starring The Mask wrapped in an attractively illustrated portfolio-style package. Look for *Summer Vacation*, *School Spirits*, *The Night Before Christmask* and the newly released *April Fool* in bookstores this February from the folks at Dark Horse. The whole package goes for a mere $14.95.

PINNED DOWN

Fans hankerin' for more of Neil Gaiman's Sandman should keep an eye out in January for the Sandman Cloisonné Pin for only $7.95. Depicting the Dream King himself, the pin features artwork from artist Marc Hempel, who drew the climactic "The Kindly Ones" story-arc in *Sandman* #57-#69. And unlike earlier Sandman pins, this one's shaped just like the Sandman's body (in other words, it ain't square or round) to give it that "I just died, but I'm still pretty cool" feeling.


Sandman Pin

Check your local stores for availability of all these funky-fresh products. Or just ask your friendly neighborhood comic store to special order 'em for ya!

HEY! Are you a company putting out some peachy-keen, comic-related merchandise like Gen[13] acne cream, The Tick Flea Collars or Daredevil sunglasses? If so, we'd love to include 'em in our groovy "Junk Drawer" column. (Of course, we'd also like posters, novels, T-shirts, sculptures, magnets, etc.) Please send all info and sample products to:

Junk Drawer
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920

by Steve Brown

WIZARD'S BEST VIDEO GAME BETS FOR 1997

Currently, five major video game systems are vying for your disposable (and perhaps not so disposable) income. The Sony PlayStation, Sega Saturn, SNES, Sega Genesis and the new Nintendo 64 are producing so many choices, it can be real disorienting for most of today's gamers. So what games do you want to add to your video game library? How do you know which games really rock? Yeah, it can be pretty tough finding the "right" game, but don't worry, 'cause we've done it for ya! This month, for your playing pleasure, we've selected the top games for each major system, all of which are available now.

PLAYSTATION

TITLE: *Wipeout XL*
MANUFACTURER: Psygnosis
SUGGESTED RETAIL: $49.99

Wipeout XL is a stunning sequel to the near-classic *Wipeout*, an early PlayStation release. As in the original jaw-dropper, *Wipeout XL* is a futuristic racing game that features anti-gravity ships. This sequel completely blows the original away: It's twice as fast, has tighter controls, a cooler soundtrack and new weapons (plasma bolts, auto-pilots and thunder bombs). *Wipeout XL* gives you an idea of what racing might be like 20 years into the future. As soon as we started playing, we were hopelessly hooked. Crisp, super-accurate, polygonal graphics create a wonderful alternate world where the only thing that matters is winning.

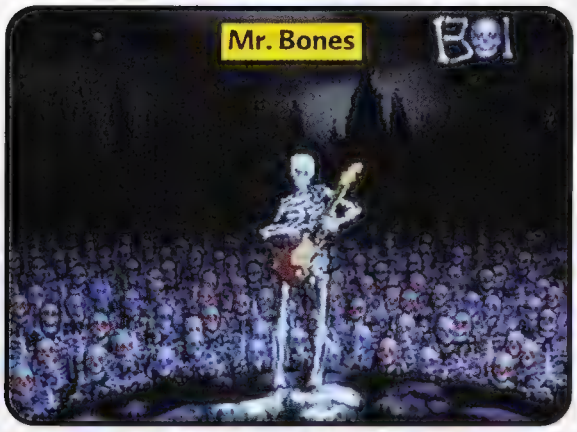
PLAYSTATION RUNNER-UP: *Crash Bandicoot*

Sony's first attempt at 3-D adventure gaming tries real hard to best N64's *Super Mario* and comes amazingly close. *Crash Bandicoot* doesn't break a lot of new ground, but it's a blast.

SATURN

TITLE: *Mr. Bones*
MANUFACTURER: Sega
SUGGESTED RETAIL: $49.99

Mr. Bones is a musically interactive game that combines extraordinary depth, different gameplay genres and high-tech animation. A dead blues musician recently res-



urrected from the grave, Mr. Bones finds himself unwillingly enlisted into an evil army of darkness. As Mr. Bones, players must stop the spread of eternal darkness. Though it's a truly original 32-bit game, one rap against *Mr. Bones* is that it's waaay tough. Twenty levels that become progressively more difficult can be pretty rough for the casual gamer to conquer. Although, if this originality is the direction that Saturn's headed, you might want to consider picking up this system.

SATURN RUNNER-UP:
Nights Into Dreams
With this game, Sega has created a new superstar—hopefully, the inevitable Saturday morning cartoon won't follow. *Nights Into Action* is a ground-breaking game mixing equal parts high-tech racing with adventure *a la* the Genesis' early fuzzy hit *Sonic the Hedgehog*. Highly recommended and a must-have for Saturn owners.

NINTENDO 64

TITLE: *Shadows of the Empire*
MANUFACTURER: Nintendo
SUGGESTED RETAIL: $79.99
Shadows of the Empire is THE definitive licensed video game. No other release has so perfectly captured the look and feel of its initial source, be it a film or comic book. A fairly basic adventure game, *Shadows* has 10 unique levels that gamers must travel through to reach the game's conclusion. In the first level, "Battle of Hoth," you pilot a Rebel Snow Speeder against Imperial Probes, Mini-Walkers and finally an AT-AT! The coolest feature is that you can actually fire a cable-harpoon and wrap it around the AT-AT's legs (just like Luke did in "The Empire Strikes Back"). The explosions are so intense, you may find yourself crashing on purpose just to eyeball 'em. And the between-stage animation sequences are also beautifully rendered. The only sub-standard level is "Asteroid Field," a boring "point-and-click" exercise. The *DOOM*-type "shoot-'em-up" levels are more adventure-oriented, and give gamers more to do than simply killing everything that moves (although you can do that, too…and the corpses stick around). One level's goal is to find bounty hunter droid IG-88 in an alien junkyard and destroy him. In another level, you must track down the infamous Boba Fett for a showdown. Easily a favorite and a must-have for N64 owners.

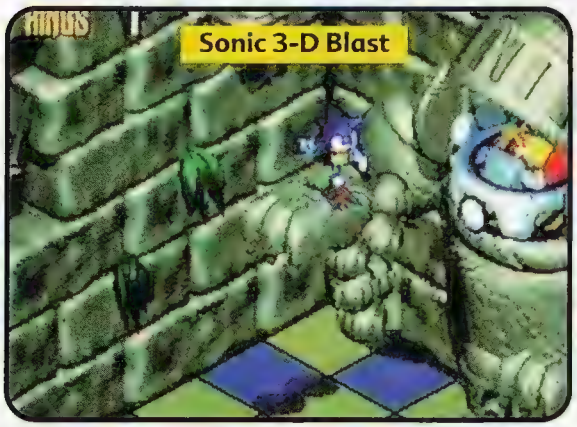
GENESIS

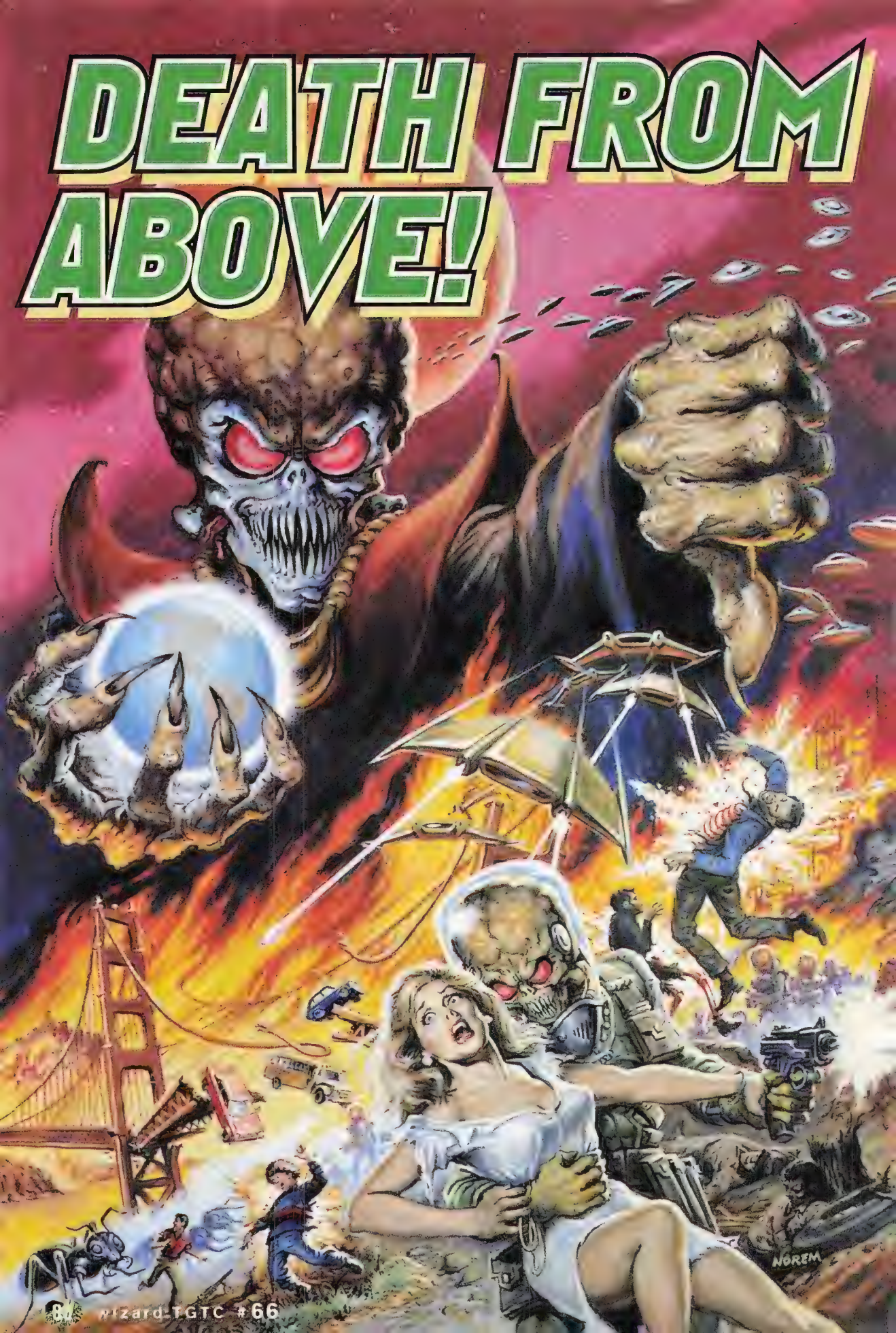
TITLE: *Sonic 3-D Blast*
MANUFACTURER: Sega

SUGGESTED RETAIL: $59.99
These are the last days of 16-bit gaming and Sega hasn't forsaken the few remaining players who still want Genesis games. *Sonic 3-D Blast* is a solid effort that won't disappoint the 16-bit audience. If you're a 32-bit junkie…stay away, this game wasn't meant for you. The fastest game ever made for the Genesis, *Sonic 3-D Blast* is a three-quarter-view speedfest as you battle Dr. Robotnik and his evil Flickies. Fun and fast-paced, buy this one for the younger gamers.

SUPERNINTENDO

TITLE: *Donkey Kong Country 3: Dixie Kong's Double Trouble*
MANUFACTURER: Nintendo
SUGGESTED RETAIL: $79.99!
Amazingly, *Donkey Kong Country 3* looks as good as any 32-bit game, and plays *better* than most. Forty-eight stages and seven secret levels make this the biggest, most in-depth SNES game ever. If you enjoyed the previous Donkey Kong installments, then this game's for you. Unfortunately, *Donkey Kong 3* is probably Nintendo's last hurrah for its 16-bit machine. And it's too bad—this is a really fun game that many younger gamers might miss out on.




DEATH FROM ABOVE!
NOREM

MARS ATTACKS

The Martians are coming! It looks like no one on earth is safe... or maybe some people will be.

You just might be spared the wrath of the invading onslaught if you cozy up to the Martians by following their continuing adventures in Mars Attacks #1/2, one of those nifty-swell Wizard-exclusive #1/2 offer comics! Order it today and you get:

- **A brand-new, all-original story giving you an as-yet-untold chapter in the Martian invasion saga by writer Dwight Jon Zimmerman and artist Claude St. Aubin!**
- **A stellar Earl Norem painted *Mars Attacks* cover, seen here in all its glory!**
- **Behind-the-scenes sketchbook material! See what went into the making of the comic!**
- **And the best part of all—a *Mars Attacks* comic you can't get anywhere else! This exclusive book is available through this one-time-only *Wizard* offer! Get it today or you'll never know the full scoop! Maybe the Martians blow up your hometown. Maybe they don't.**

Hey, one way or the other, you've got to find out! Send today to get your copy of Mars Attacks #1/2 and see if you've still got a home....or just a smoldering pile of rubble!

LAWYERS ATTACK

No reproductions of this coupon will be accepted. This coupon must be sent in the accompanying envelope, one coupon per comic. You may cut additional coupons in the same envelope. Remit by check or money order only. Canadian orders remit $4.00, other foreign orders remit $6.00. All payment must be in U.S. funds drawn on a U.S. bank. Make all checks payable to Wizard Press. Offer good only while supply lasts. If the Martians cut one in those space suits it's gotta be murder. Please allow eight to 12 weeks for delivery. Changes of address will not be forwarded unless Wizard Press is notified in writing by March 17, 1997.

THIS OFFER EXPIRES MARCH 17, 1997.

THE TOY CHEST

THE FUTURE OF STAR WARS TOYS

Bossk

Luke in Hoth Gear

AT-ST Driver

2-1B Medic Droid

Coinciding with January's Special Edition release of "Star Wars: A New Hope," Kenner launches into 1997 with several new deluxe action figures and vehicles celebrating the 20th anniversary of George Lucas' galactic opus. It's been over twenty years since Kenner first acquired the rights to produce Star Wars toys, and as a whole new audience discovers the power of the Force on the big screen, Kenner once again reinvents the magic for toy fans.

Last issue's "Toy Chest" spotlighted the all-new Electronic F/X figures, including Darth Vader, Ben Kenobi and R2-D2, in addition to Cruisemissile Trooper and Luke Skywalker's T-16, which should already be hitting stores.

This February promises the release of the **Deluxe Boba Fett with Firing Jetpack** and **Deluxe Imperial Probe Droid** (from "The Empire Strikes Back").

February's new standard action figures—also based on characters from "The Empire Strikes Back"—include an Imperial **AT-ST Driver**, bounty hunter **Bossk** and a **Hoth Rebel Soldier**.

And not to be outdone, the Dark Lord of the Sith finally gets his own ship back this March, with Kenner's updated release of the **Darth Vader TIE Fighter**.

Looking ahead, Kenner's Star Wars line appears poised to rival its original line from the '70s and '80s. As the Special Edition release of "Return of the Jedi" hits movie theaters, expect future assortments to include more "Jedi"-based figures, like the brand-new **Luke in Endor Gear**, which arrives in February complete with **Speeder Bike**.

Collectors can also look forward to roaming the aisles this March in search of wonderful new "Empire" sculpts of the **2-1B Medic Droid** (which gave Luke his funky cyborg hand!), as well as **Luke in Hoth Gear** (sadly, *sans* Taun-Taun)!

STAR WARS FAN CLUB PLAYS WITH THE CANTINA BAND

The Official Star Wars Fan Club is also jumping on the 20th anniversary bandwagon with its very own exclusive Star Wars action figure produced in conjunction with Kenner and Lucasfilm, set for release in May 1997.

Joining the ranks of current action figure offerings is the first-ever Cantina Band Member! Die-hard "Star Wars" fans fondly remember the alien Bith band from the Mos Eisley spaceport.

Now, action figure collectors can assemble the entire band (Figrin D'an and the Modal Nodes) in this *exclusive* fan club offer. Available for order beginning in January, the Cantina Band Member arrives with five different band instruments and includes elbow articulation to allow the figure to play any instrument—collect five and you've got the whole band!

The Official Star Wars Fan Club will *not* limit the amount of figures a collector may order, however, there will be no quantity discounts, wholesale prices or dealer discounts—which gives all fans a fair shake. Any remaining figures after all orders are filled will be made available to the general public, probably through the *Star Wars Insider* merchandise catalog. At press time, the approximate cost per figure was estimated at $7-$9. The Club stipulates that the Cantina Band Member could be a one-time-only offer. It may never be offered carded—and once the production run is depleted, it might never be re-offered.

For a membership in the Official Star Wars Fan Club, including a four-issue subscription to *Star Wars Insider*, just send $12.95 c/o The Star Wars Insider, P.O. Box 111000, Aurora, CO 80042.

Figrin D'an

BY **SCOTT BEATTY**

FORCE WORKS

TIMEOUT WITH KENNER'S STAR WARS TEAM LEADER TIM HALL

Like many fans his age, thirty-something Tim Hall caught the allure of the Force when he was a kid in 1977, enjoying the same Kenner action figures that made toy history. Today, he's Team Leader for Star Wars at Kenner, overseeing all aspects of the toy line from development to licensing, marketing, design and engineering. And he couldn't be happier. Tim recently took time out from making toys to fill "Toy Chest" readers in on the future of Kenner's Star Wars toys.

WIZARD: What's the first thing you look at when designing or redesigning a figure?

HALL: We look at the movies and say, "How can we make this an exciting toy?" And we spend an awful lot of time talking to the people at Lucasfilm. Every person there is as passionate about Star Wars as we are. It's a very close relationship throughout the development process. We have some very casual give-and-take on how we best think we can bring a figure to life as a toy.

Are the actual production designs from Lucasfilm used in creating the figures and their accessories?

We've had access to all the wonderful artifacts from the movies. We've been able to go into the archives and photograph some of the actual character masks for the alien figures we've done, some of the actual props used for the ships, props for the weapons and that sort of thing.

How do you choose which characters get to be made into action figures?

We try to have a good mix of core characters from the movies—different versions of Luke and Han—and try to have a very broad range of droids and the different creatures that make "Star Wars" so special.

Why not make the figures more articulated to reflect current toys?

There is a trade-off in any toy between articulation and realism. We feel we've struck the right balance with these figures, achieving enough articulation for them to be fun when played with, and balancing that well with not having too many joints in the elbows and knees.

While most current action figures tower over 5 inches, Star Wars remains at the once industry standard 3 3/4 inches. What's the rationale?

The Kenner Star Wars line launched the industry in 1978. It set the standard. We felt that coming back to the category's roots when we re-launched this line really made a lot of sense. It's also a great scale to enable us to allow a broad range of vehicles.

Since Kenner devoted the energy in redesigning and re-sculpting the action figures from the 1970s, why were the vehicles only changed cosmetically for the most part?

We're really proud of the way the vehicles look. Many use the existing mold from the first go-round because when we looked at them, we realized they really were at such a high standard for the time. The level of detail in some of these items like the Millennium Falcon is unparalleled today. So we figured that adding the realistic movie sounds—straight off the movies—and really going crazy with the paint decoration, were the best ways to bring them up to date.

We've also done many new vehicles; in the "Shadows of the Empire" line we've done two completely new vehicles. For the spring, we've got a couple of new vehicles that are based off completely new molds as well.

What alteration between the updated figures and the "classic" ones satisfies you the most?

I think our ability to really deliver authenticity from the movie has been very, very pleasing. Our likenesses are much closer, obviously, than the original line. The extent of paint decoration that we're using now is much further along than the original line, as are some other tactics—we use sculpted vinyl separate-piece capes, versus the fabric ones. Those elements are the most satisfying.

What figure do you feel was the most successful translation from film to action figure?

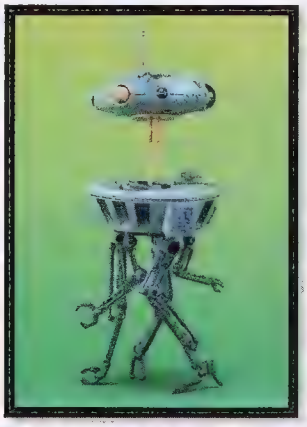
That's like saying which one of my kids do I love the best? I think *all* of them are wonderful translations. I think a more interesting question is, "What was the most interesting process in bringing to life a Star Wars character?" And that would be doing "Shadows." We were developing figures at the same time the publishing people were drawing the models and at the same time LucasArts/Nintendo were doing early modeling. So, we had everybody working at the same time on what these characters would look like and interpreting them from the written text from Bantam and Dark Horse Comics.

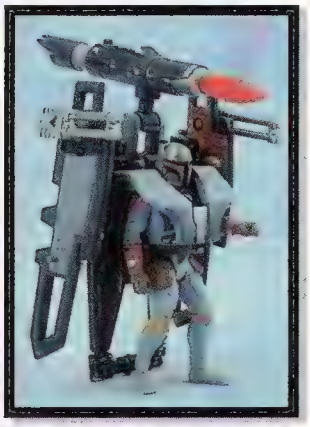
What's the future for the "Shadows of the Empire" line?

That was all targeted as a 1996 program for us to follow the novel that came out last spring from Bantam and the [Dark Horse] comics. We can't really comment on the long-term picture, because the reaction to "Shadows" was so incredibly strong, and we're really pleased with how well both kids and collectors took to it. Our initial plans for 1997 are to focus mostly on trilogy-based products.

"Shadows" seemed to fit in seamlessly with the regular Power of the Force line. Was that your intent?

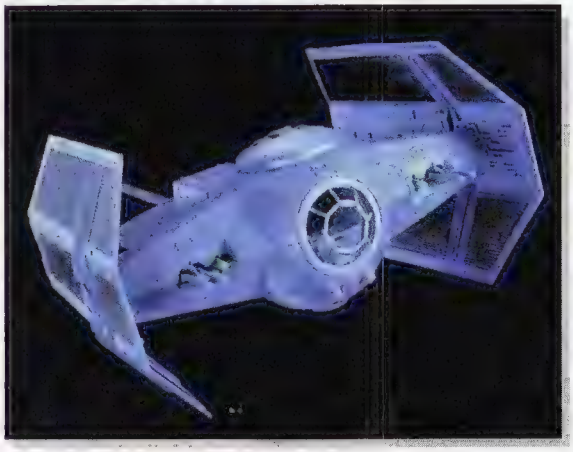
That's a fair way to assess our strategy. We wanted





Left to right: Rebel in Hoth Gear, Deluxe Imperial Probe Droid and Deluxe Boba Fett with Firing Jetpack

BELOW: Luke in Endor Gear with Speeder Bike
BOTTOM: Darth Vader TIE Fighter



them to be very distinctive, and we wanted kids and obviously collectors, to understand that these were part of this special "Shadows" story. But Snoova can "play" with the rest of your figures. They feel like they're all part of the same toy line…as they should.

What's your favorite Star Wars figure to date?
I've always been a Boba Fett fan. I can honestly remember submitting my proofs-of-purchase in 1979…and waiting…and giving up…and then he *finally* came. We're a lot quicker with redemptions today.

Early releases in the new Star Wars line seemed excessively muscular. Has the line "toned down" since its return?
We don't just forget about the product once it's in the marketplace. So when Luke Skywalker and Han went out, I think we'll all admit that the originals were too "buffed up." And we made a very conscious decision, in partnership with Lucasfilm, to bring the body proportions a bit closer to the movie. We still kept them very heroic, but they don't look quite so "pumped up."

Are there plans to create playsets of similar caliber to those of the '70s and '80s?
There are two exciting Death Star playsets out on the market now. I can't comment on further plans, but we feel it's pretty important to have a place to play with your figures and your vehicles.

Settle a wager among fans for us. Is the new IG-88 a re-sculpt or a re-cast of the original?
IG-88 is an all-new re-sculpt. There's been a lot of contention. We've seen it on different websites of whether it was a re-release of the first one. But that's an all-new sculpt.

We're already reporting on the all-new Cantina Band Member mail-in offer in this column. Do you have any other premium figures, like the oft-mentioned "Ghost" Ben Kenobi, in the works?
Yeah, that could be the one. I think we'll be able to announce some plans for that in the spring.

What about Darth Vader with a removable helmet?
That's another one that we'll keep mum about for now. We don't just make decisions by ourselves or with Lucasfilm. We look at what people are asking for. And we constantly scour the Internet reading people's home pages to see what they're looking for.

You've seen our "Wish List," where fans tell us what figures they'd like to see. Have any of our listings influenced your plans?
One of my favorite characters is Princess Leia in her slave girl outfit. That's all I'm going to say.

Does Kenner hope to rival its previous Star Wars line?
I can't really comment on how many figures specifically we plan to unveil and roll out in the next year. But I can say that Star Wars will be bigger in 1997 than it ever has been before.

We've heard rumors that Kenner's license to produce Star Wars toys may expire soon. Should fans worry?
That's a very good question, and one of course that I couldn't answer—other than saying my passion is for Star Wars and so is everyone's in my building. We'd love to continue working on Star Wars until we're in our graves. W

Wizard staffer Scott Beatty once started a bar fight at the Mos Eisley cantina by requesting the band play a cover of Starland Vocal Band's "Afternoon Delight."

JEDI WISH LIST

THE 10 STAR WARS ACTION FIGURES THAT *WIZARD* WANTS TO SEE MADE

™ & © Lucasfilm

1) Princess Leia in Slave Girl Outfit
Check out Kenner's Star Wars team leader Tim Rall's final comments for the future of this one. If the big "K" serves her up with a Jabba choker chain, we'll all be real happy.

2) Grand Moff Tarkin
While Vader was a lapdog in "Star Wars," this guy was the real meanie (blowin' up planets and all). Give him an Imperial Interrogation Droid and he's all set to go down with the Death Star.

3) Rebel Blockade Runner Trooper
The "Star Wars" equivalent of Trek red shirts should arrive with removable white helmet, blaster and "I'm also the Lighting Assistant on this film" dying grimace.

4) Darth Vader w/ Removable Helmet
Yup. Anakin Skywalker looking all pasty faced and icky for the final sappy moments with Luke. "Sniff!"

5) Jabba the Hutt
Tatooine's bad-ass crimelord will arrive with that neat flexible "dino-flesh" (a la Kenner's "Jurassic Park" dinosaurs) and a cute R2 Salacious Crumb sidekick figure.

6) Imperial Snitch (Garindan)
The fink that ratted out Ben, Luke and the Droids outside of Docking Bay 94 at the Mos Eisley Spaceport should have a removable cloak, blaster … and a handful of credits for his lowdown blood money.

7) Snowtrooper
Cooler than Hoth, this Imperial soldier would come with a removable skirt ("snicker"), heavy blaster rifle and tripod cannon.

8) Imperial Guard
The Emperor's finest should be served up just like the original—with a real cloth cloak and battle staff.

9) The Emperor
The Master of the Dark Side comes with removable cloak (so Vader can give him a sponge bath, of course) and snap-on "Force Bolts."

10) Wampa
The Abominable Snow Wharrls that gave Luke his new kisser would come with his own Ice Cave Playset, featuring a disemboweled Taun Taun!

HONORABLE MENTION:
Aunt Bero and Uncle Owen Lars Two-Pack
The kindly farm couple that raised Luke Skywalker and game him some good ol' family values arrives with a moisture vaporizer. For a couple of proofs-of-purchase, you can even get the official "Charred Corpse Uncle Owen and Aunt Bero."

Hey! Keep sending them Top 10 lists! You've already made a difference! Drop us a note with your "dream figures" at:

c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Avenue
Congers, NY 10920

Or e-mail us at:
WizardTGTC@aol.com

WIZARD

#67

"HEROES REBORN" cover by JIM LEE!

FREE BATMAN/WILDCAT DIE-CUT CHROMIUM CARD!

FREE STAR WARS™ POSTER BY DAVE DORMAN!

HOT!

STAR WARS NO. 1/2

J'M LEE McWEENEY

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HOMEMADE HEROES

THE ARENA FOR FAN-MADE ACTION FIGURES.

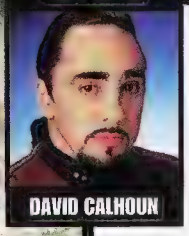
GRAND PRIZE

All of the following figures were made from plain old, ordinary figures and household materials, and each of these megatalented creators will receive two 5-inch Toy Biz Marvel action figures. The Runner-Up will also get a 10-inch Toy Biz Marvel action figure, and the Grand Prize Winner takes home all that stuff *plus* a Toy Biz Marvel model kit. Super work, folks!

Thanks to the folks from Toy Biz for their generous donation of prizes. You guys are the balloons in our parade!

TOY BIZ

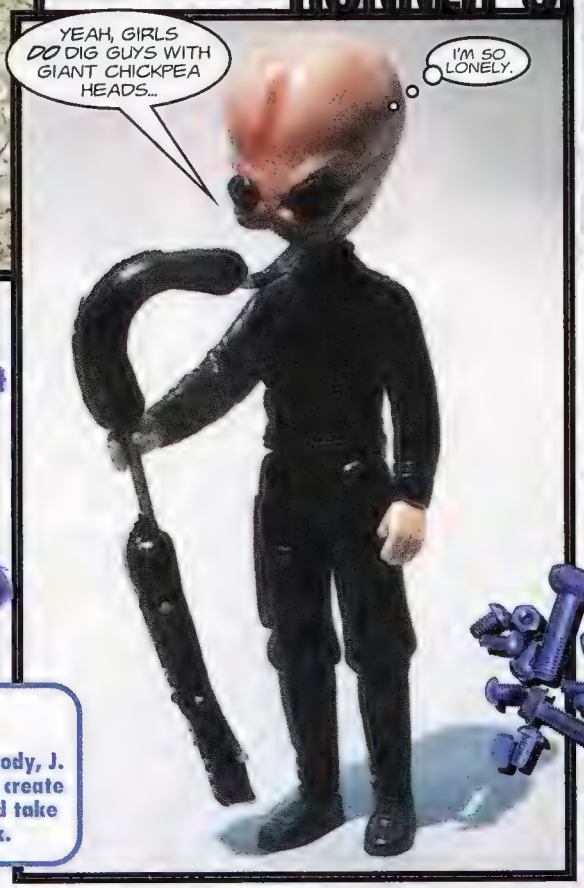
THE WINNER



DAVID CALHOUN

WITCHBLADE
David Calhoun of Lithia Springs, Ga.
This Witchblade was made from a Barbie Teresa doll with the help of some Super Sculpey for the spear, breastplate and clothing.

RUNNER-UP



FIGRIN D'AN
J. Heston of Hewitt, Texas
Taking the old Star Wars Bespin Guard body, J. added a new, sculpted head and horn to create this little Cantina bugger. This guy could take down Kenny G any day of the week.

CAPTAIN AMERICA AND BATMAN

S. John of Richmond, British Columbia, Canada

Like something out of a Sergio Aragonés comic, Bats and Cap were shaped with an "overpriced" German modeling kit and a felt-tipped pen (we don't even wanna *know* where Mr. John put *that*).

SUPER SOLDIER

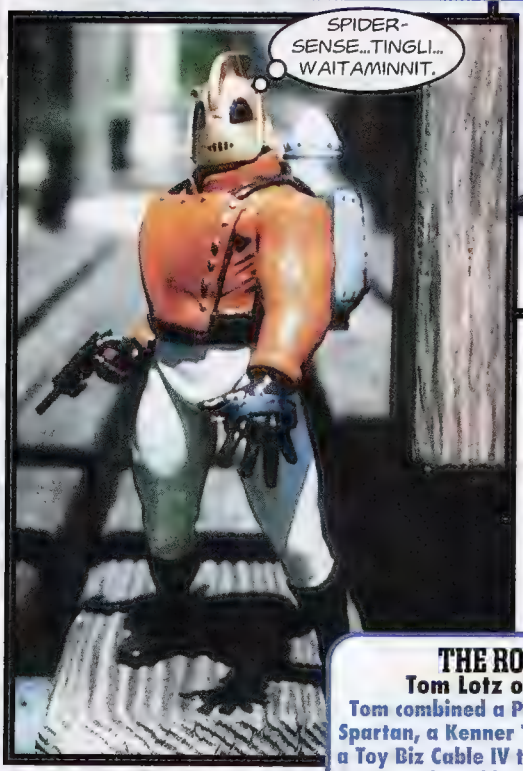
Brian K. Thomas of Southampton, N.J.

After Brian popped a Toy Biz Havok head on a Toy Biz Captain America, he brought to life the Amalgam figure we'll probably never ever see because of the dreaded legal red tape.

REN AND STIMPY

Luca Pusterla of Torino, Italy

How cool is this Ren & Stimpy?!? Hand-sculpted, it just makes you wanna smile and sing, "Happy, Happy, Joy, Joy!" and then vomit up the hair you've licked off your body.



THE ROCKETEER

Tom Lotz of Naples, Fla.

Tom combined a Playmates WildC.A.T.s Spartan, a Kenner Turbo Jet Batman and a Toy Biz Cable IV to make the Rocketeer ready to blast off into action.

HEY!

If you're interested in entering the homemade figure contest, send well-lit, clear, color photographs (No Polaroids, and put 'em in a cool or funny pose!), along with your name, address, description of how you created your figure, and your full phone number (including area code) to:

HOMEMADE HEROES
c/o Wizard Press
PO Box 118
Congers, NY 10920-0118

a look at some cool stuff with an alternative twist

Make Room for Daddy

From personal heartache to future paranoia, Joe Chiappetta reinvents autobiographical comics in *Silly Daddy*

Joe Chiappetta is bored. To be specific, he says he's bored with comics. But yet he furiously self-publishes and promotes his autobiographical comic *Silly Daddy*. Sound strange or contradictory to you? "I think my boredom is what makes *Silly Daddy* worth it," the 28-year-old Illinois-based artist explains. "It's difficult getting my comic out in a way that's interesting to me. Not only do I have to write it in a way that's interesting, but I have to draw it in a way that I'm not bored to death doing it. I strive to come up with new ways to do things. If I can't find new ways to do comics, I'm going to stop doing them."

It's this sense of artistic restlessness that makes *Silly Daddy* such a unique and rewarding comic. Chiappetta is one of the few cartoonists who has been able to develop an identifiable shorthand; he has his own set of stylistic devices that make his comics instantly recognizable. In fact, he blends words and pictures together in such a unique way that he is one of the few cartoonists who understand comics' potential to communicate stories and thoughts between author and reader.

Establishing a rapport with readers is essential for a comic with such personal subject matter as *Silly Daddy*. Chiappetta's comic is more introspective and soul-searching than the usual autobiographical fare. The early issues of *Silly Daddy*, published as a photocopied mini-comic, detailed his relationship with his daughter Maria and his troubled marriage (and subsequent divorce) with stark and sometimes brutal honesty. Even in these early issues, Chiappetta's experimentation with the medium is evident: He fully integrates word balloons into the panels, so much so that thought balloons sometimes come directly out a character's nostrils; the balloons don't merely "float," but are attached to the characters themselves. When Chiappetta's wife tells him she wants a divorce, he draws himself with a hole in his chest and his heart dropping off the page. All of these innovations utilize comics for their special power: to *show* instead of simply telling.

The first seven mini-comics were collected in the 1994 comic book-sized graphic novel *Silly Daddy: The Long Goodbye*, when it finally dawned on Chiappetta that mini-comics get no respect—not only with fans, but at the retail level. "If the Christian Bible were available only as a mini-comic," Chiappetta states, "I'm convinced that all of America would be Buddhists or something else. So no more mini-comics for me. It's just bad business."

After the book collection, Chiappetta continued *Silly Daddy* as a full-sized flip book, with John Porcellino's *King Cat* filling out the reverse side. He published two self-contained

Upper left: Maria and her dad Joe
Below: Joe's new flame Denise, from the cover of *Silly Daddy* #10

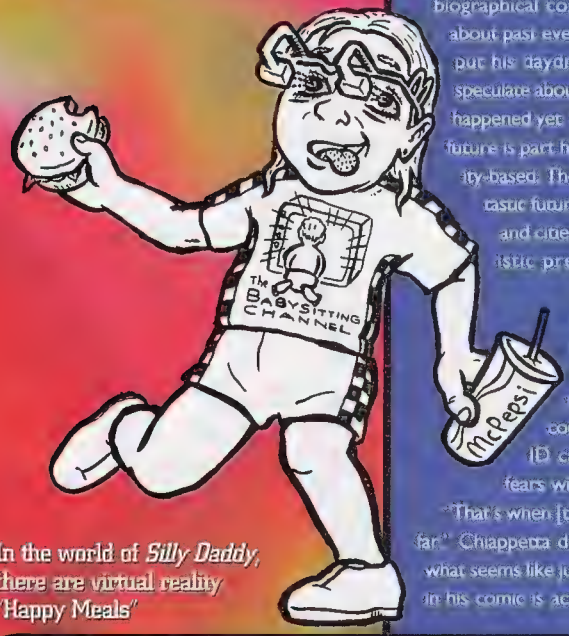
by tom palmer jr.

stories before starting the current tale, "A Death in the Family," in *Silly Daddy* #10, the first full-sized entirely Chiappetta work. This new storyline puts yet another twist on autobiographical comics. Instead of writing about past events, Chiappetta chose to put his daydreaming to good use to speculate about things that haven't even happened yet. Chiappetta's vision of the future is part high-fantasy and part reality-based. There are the expected fantastic future elements like flying cars and cities on suits, as well as realistic predictions of items like portable electronic comic books. The story also has many political "Big Brother-ish" elements like human bar code tattoos and mandatory ID cards, which Chiappetta fears will one day come true.

"That's when [the government] goes too far," Chiappetta declares. It's obvious that what seems like just a background element in his comic is actually very meaningful to him. "Eventually, they'll muscle stuff like that in, because people are not empowered within their own government and it's too hard and expensive to fight legalized injustice. I feel that inch by inch they're taking away all of our personal freedoms. One day we're going to wake up and realize you can't even go to the bathroom without having an access code!"

Chiappetta might not have an optimistic view of the future, but he seems to be enjoying life right now. *Silly Daddy* is gaining recognition. He's engaged to be married again. And he's still able to see one of the most important people in his life (although not as often as he'd like). "'The Coach' [his nickname for daughter Maria] is great. I miss her so much now. I used to watch her every day [after the divorce], but now that doesn't happen. I see her every other weekend and one day during the week. If I want to see her more, I can, but she's in school now; she's in kindergarten. It's sort of weird feeling like I have to borrow my own kid. That doesn't feel right." W

When Tom Palmer Jr. becomes a daddy, he's going to name his daughter Rosy.



In the world of *Silly Daddy*, there are virtual reality "Happy Meals"

FYI

Issue #12 of *Silly Daddy*, the conclusion to "A Death in the Family," will be out in January at your local comic shop. Joe is also one of the few self-publishers whose work is being distributed through magazine stands, so you might be able to find his comic at larger bookstores. If you still have trouble finding *Silly Daddy*, write to Joe directly at 2209 Northgate Ave., N. Riverside, IL 60546-1339 and send $3 for the latest issue. Joe also has selected back issues and copies of *The Long Goodbye*, a 100-page graphic novel that reprints the first seven issues.

Joe Chiappetta's Recommended Reading

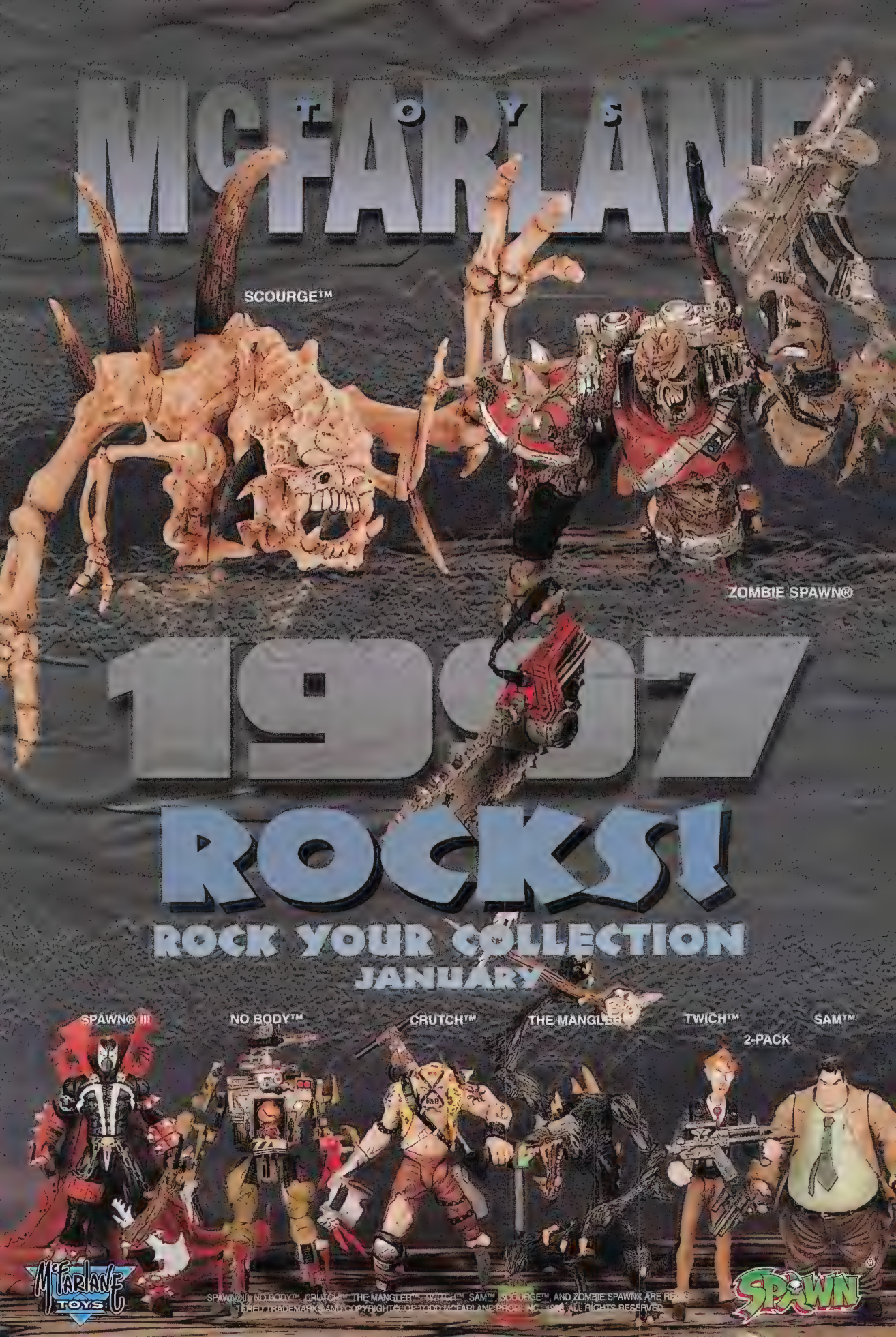
"Aside from 'The Revival' by James Sturm, most other offset-printed comics aren't worth the glossy paper that they are printed on. My three favorite comics—and the only ones that I actually drop everything to read—are *King Cat* by John Porcellino, *Strange Growths* by Jenny Zervakis, and *The Magic Whistle* by Sam Henderson. All these comics profoundly grab me by the loins and have been doing so for years. Ironically, these three titles are all photocopied and digest-sized."

Recommended Reading

Skeleton Key This wonderful comic by Andi Watson has a lot of things going for it. The lead characters are two intelligently written women drawn with believable measurements, who stumble upon a key that can open doors to anywhere. Watson writes some snappy dialogue and has a crisp, clean black-and-white style. To top it all off, *Skeleton Key* is published monthly and only costs $1.75 (a reasonable price for an independent series). Look for issue #19 in January, which begins a series of self-contained stories—an ideal jumping-on point. Drop a line to Slave Labor Graphics at 979 S. Bascom Ave, San Jose, CA 95128 or call them at 1-800-866-8929 for availability of back issues and *Beyond the Threshold*, a collection of the first six-issue storyline.

Keyhole Tired of anthologies that won't hold your attention for more than a two-page story? A nice alternative would be Dean Haspiel and Josh Neufeld's *Keyhole*. While not technically an anthology (it only features work by two people, and they don't accept submissions), *Keyhole* has such a wide range of short stories, from travel strips based on Neufeld's journey through Asia to Haspiel's wonky superhero "Billy Dogma," that every issue feels like an anthology. Haspiel's stylized black-and-white art contrasts nicely with Neufeld's earthy cartooning to make for a consistently good-looking comic. The third issue of *Keyhole* will be out in January, but if you have problems finding a copy you can write to Millennium Publications, 105 Edgewater Rd., Narragansett, RI 02882.

Smith Brown Jones You might have caught a segment on "MTV News: Unfiltered" about Jon "Bean" Hastings and his comic *Smith Brown Jones* (which stars an alien who comes to Earth posing as a tabloid reporter). Hastings has a nice cartooning style and a knack for creative (and free!) advertising, and he's got a pretty neat little book on his hands. You're guaranteed to fall for this fun little comic. For a sample issue, just send $4 to Kiwi Studios, PO Box 468, San Ramon, CA 94583.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THE SKINNY

Comic book REVIEWS from the *Wizard* Editors

THE SCORING

6 THE BEST · 5 EXCELLENT · 4 GOOD · 3 SO-SO · 2 UGH · 1 CRAPOLA

GENERATION X

Everyone should be talking about this Generation

Genre: Superhero action/adventure
Publisher: Marvel Comics
Creative Team: Scott Lobdell, Chris Bachalo and Mark Buckingham
Price/Frequency: $1.95/Monthly

What You Need to Know: Teenagers attend the Xavier School for Gifted Youngsters to learn how to master their mutant superpowers under the tutelage of elder mutants Banshee and the White Queen. The students include Jubilee, Synch, Mondo, Skin, M, Chamber, Husk and Penance.

The Good: This is a solid comic book series. The personalities of the characters are distinct. The stories are entertaining. The art is stylish.

This is a book about kids in school, only they just happen to have superpowers; one doesn't detract from the other. The book's hip dialogue and interaction allow you to understand who these people are–and the humor is genuine and never forced. A lot of times, the fourth wall is broken with good results. On page one in issue #19, Synch says he can't stay for the story recap because, "I'm needed on page 4."

The stories are strongly supported by great artwork. Penciler Chris Bachalo is definitely having fun with this book. In #19's story with the Toad, there're frogs jumping in practically every panel. When the kids are taking a test in #21, Jubilee's doodles are incorporated into the story. And though Bachalo likes to use a gazillion panels on a page, the storytelling is easy to follow.

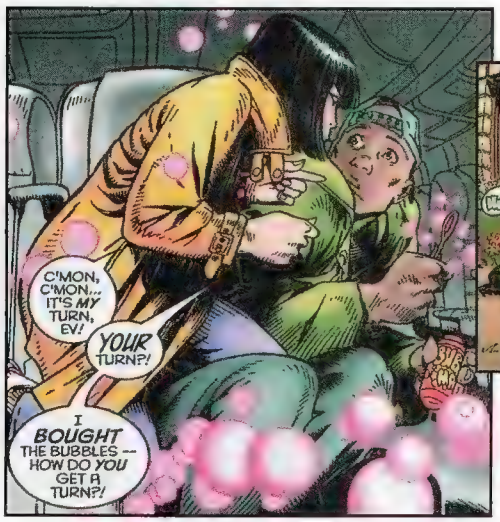
Guest characters fit in comfortably. Guest-shots and cameos made by Howard the Duck, Sasquatch, Beast and Nate Richards are never forced and always add to the story.

The Bad: There are a few back-stories that are set up and not resolved—a problem that still haunts *Uncanny X-Men*. Each time you're given a new subplot, a resolution is ultimately called for, not a checklist of things to look out for in the future. Example: As the cliffhanger in issue #21, why does the Beast point out that M is autistic, but absolutely nothing is mentioned of it in issue #22? It's awkward.

And while it's boring when action sequences are overdone, in *Generation X* there aren't *enough*. Very little superhero conflict is presented to the reader here, and when it happens, it's subdued. The conflict with Toad wasn't a fight, it was a talk. Nightmare doesn't come to wreak havok, he just whines a lot. It leaves you a little starved for action, but…

The Buzz: …the action is expected to heat up in an upcoming storyline with Black Tom Cassidy taking custody of the kids. Readers are promised a blow-up in the status quo of the book. Plus, there's a Fox TV series in the works, so the book's due for even more exposure.

The Skinny: This is the best X-book out there, with great humor, quirky art and established characterizations. If it does a little more with what it has, it could achieve even greater heights.



The Verdict: 5

Above left: Strong characterization and humor drives Generation X

Above right: An example of how fun the art is as frogs appear in almost every panel of #19

X-FILES

Truth is, this book is way out there

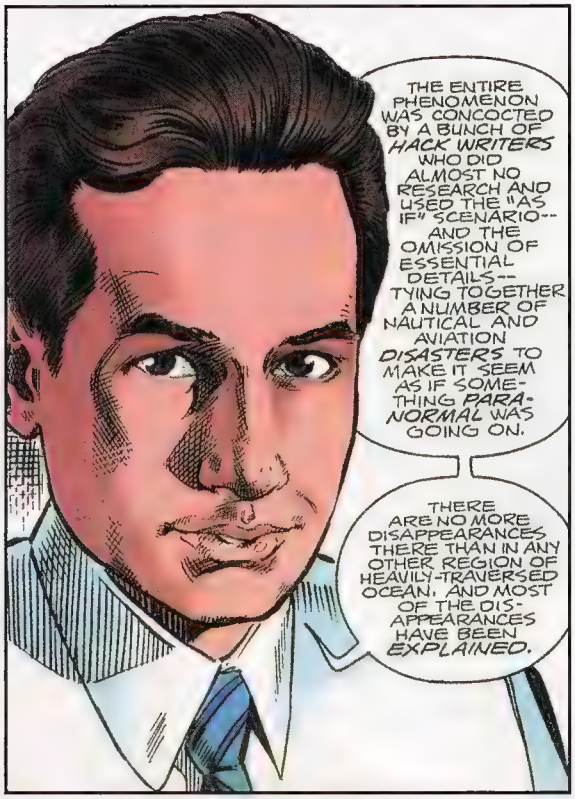
Genre: Science-fiction/horror
Publisher: Topps Comics
Creative team: Stefan Petrucha, John Rozum, Charles Adlard, Gordon Purcell and Joe Rubinstein
Price/Frequency: $2.95/Monthly

What You Need to Know: Based on the Fox TV show of the same name, FBI agents Fox Mulder and Dana Scully investigate strange phenomena taken from the FBI's "X-Files."

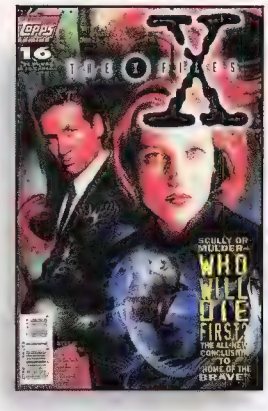
The Good: This book is trying very hard to match the structural feel of the show: How the stories are set up, the amount of information revealed to you and the drives of the characters are in synch with the TV show.

As you'd want in a book like this, the concepts presented are intriguing. Is ball lightning alive (*X-Files* #18-#19)? Was a pilot lost in the Bermuda Triangle 50 years ago really abducted by aliens (#17)? Are the stories of a Hawaiian strangling ghost really true (#22)? Each time you're presented with questions like that, you want to find the answers.

Thankfully, you're provided with a lot of background information to the story also. Everything you need to know about the phenomena at hand is given to you, which makes you an educated reader. All of these hook you into the stories.



The Bad: Getting you hooked on the stories is a good thing only if the book delivers in the end, which this series doesn't. In many regards, that's the point of the TV show—an end without an explanation. However, an ending like that put down on paper is so startling that you're left asking yourself why you read the book. Is there a ball-lightning life form or a strangling ghost? We don't know. We're now the most educated readers about each phenomena, but we're also left with more questions than answers.



The endings are usually very sudden, with the reader either getting no information...or a curve ball, stunned that the story is over. Either way, it's unfulfilling. How does the TV show get away with doing this to you? Easy: it distracts you with a dark and off-beat mood. This comic doesn't.

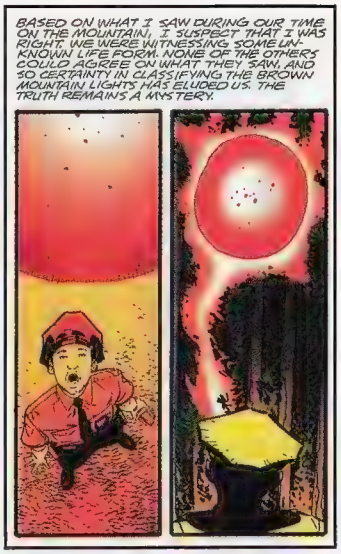
And the artwork is partly to blame for that. Instead of concentrating on conveying mood, the effort behind the artwork is apparently put towards making the characters look just like "X-Files" stars David Duchovny and Gillian Anderson, with poor results. At best they come off looking like they were *supposed* to look like the actors, but the expressions aren't there. (Many times it looks like Scully is walking around with her eyes closed.) There's no attempt to make the settings mysterious or interesting. Everything is drawn blandly and without mood. Maybe the *X-Files* team should check out Vertigo's *Sandman Mystery Theatre* to see what mood can do for a comic.

The Buzz: Doug Moench (*Batman*) is slated to take over the writing for this book. Perhaps he can inject some depth and mood into it.

The Skinny: This book is trying too hard to capture the storytelling structure of the TV show, and ignoring everything else. That's the danger of any TV or movie adaptation, forgetting that comics have different needs.

(At left) X-Files supplies good background info, as shown here from #17's Bermuda Triangle tale (as well as a poor likeness of David Duchovny)

(At right) An example of how endings are too open-ended



The Verdict: 2

NIGHTWING

Can the former Robin cut it on his own?

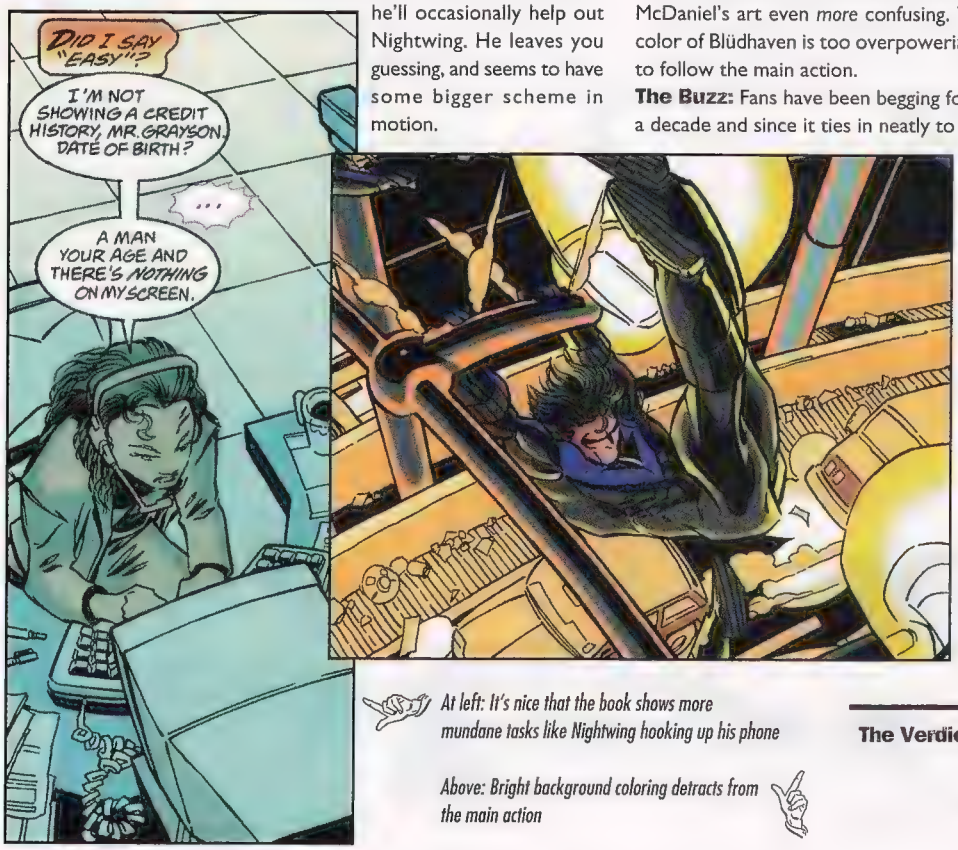
Genre: Superhero action/adventure
Publisher: DC Comics
Creative Team: Chuck Dixon, Scott McDaniel and Karl Story
Price/Frequency: $1.95/Monthly

What You Need to Know: Nightwing, a.k.a. Dick Grayson and formerly the original Robin, leaves Gotham City for the seedy city of Blüdhaven to solve multiple murders. He finds that it's going to take him a while, so he sets up shop there.

The Good: We've waited a long time for this book and it delivers on many levels. It has a down-to-earth feel with a sense of humor, and it doesn't hurt that Nightwing is a great character. He's got a good moral center (in issue #1 he gives a young runaway girl some money and a bus ticket, and tells her to head back to Gotham City and apply for a job at WayneCorp). Plus, he's not too intense like his former partner Batman.

The town of Blüdhaven itself becomes a character too. It's seedy, violent and makes Gotham look like Disney World. There's a really good mood established here.

Nightwing also has an intriguing police contact in Inspector Dudley Soames—he's as crooked as all of Blüdhaven's cops, yet he'll occasionally help out Nightwing. He leaves you guessing, and seems to have some bigger scheme in motion.



At left: It's nice that the book shows more mundane tasks like Nightwing hooking up his phone

Above: Bright background coloring detracts from the main action

There are also some nice elements that are trademarks of Chuck Dixon's writing. In one such example, Dixon actually depicts the trials of Dick's ordinary tasks like renting an apartment, hooking up his utilities and getting his phone turned on. Through such "normal" tasks, Dixon is fleshing out Nightwing as a character.

The Bad: This title's main flaw is its storytelling. The story moves waaaay too fast. Before you finish issue #1 alone, your head's swimming with the huge cast of new foes. What's missing are more private-life scenes (which Dixon does beautifully in *Robin*) that break up the lightning-fast story. Sure there are a couple of moments, like when Grayson's talking to his landlord, but they're infrequent. New readers are gonna have a tough time following this book, especially since they're rarely given the basic background info on who Nightwing is. Explaining things like how Nightwing was the first Robin (an interesting tidbit a new reader wouldn't have discovered until #4's story) would definitely make *Nightwing* more reader-friendly.

To add to this, Scott McDaniel's art at times can be pretty sketchy and hard to follow. He needs to develop his own style and stop emulating the artwork of Joe Quesada and Frank Miller. Also, the coloring style on this book is so inappropriate that it makes McDaniel's art even *more* confusing. The awkward orange/brown color of Blüdhaven is too overpowering and often makes it difficult to follow the main action.

The Buzz: Fans have been begging for a *Nightwing* series for over a decade and since it ties in neatly to the Batman mythos, readers have already started buzzing about this new series.

The Skinny: *Nightwing* is definitely on the right track...it just needs to slow down enough for everyone to catch up.

The Verdict: 3

POISON ELVES

Minor problems poison this enjoyable series

Genre: Fantasy action/adventure
Publisher: Sirius Entertainment
Creative Team: Drew Hayes
Price/Frequency: $2.50/Monthly

What You Need to Know: This is the story of Lusiphur, an elf assassin, told in flashback by his lawman friend Jace Lanargaith. Wanted by police, Lusiphur joins Sanctuary, a guild of assassins that hide out in another dimension.

The Good: *Poison Elves* has all the elements of a great fantasy tale (lone adventurer, lots of fighting, cool environment, magical elements, elves, dwarves, etc.) but with some twists. The elf assassin Lusiphur, the series' protagonist, is a character you hate to love, in that most of the time he's a real jerk who goes around killing tons of people (his ex-girlfriend and his martial arts trainer, among others). There's great character development, especially between Lusiphur and his fellow Sanctuary assassin Cassandra. She clearly loves him, while he's wary of relationships. And Hayes hasn't pushed it any further than that, avoiding the clichéd romance.

Hayes' scope of storytelling is impressive. From the onset of issue #1, Lusiphur is supposedly dead and wanted by the police. Then the series shifts 11 years into the past and tells what happened between Lusiphur's retirement and supposed death, giving the series an interesting backdrop. In another subplot, you predict that Lusiphur and Jace will eventually confront each other on opposite sides of the law. Yet, once again, Hayes avoids cliché by having Jace tell the reader that it's not what you're thinking—though you're curious as to its resolution.

With plenty of cliffhangers, unexpected twists and turns, secret organizations and lots of neat tidbits, each issue leaves you craving the next.

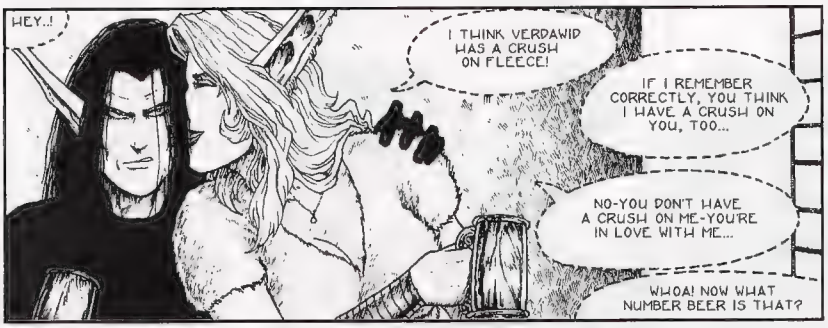
The Bad: Many times this series looks amateurish...and it's a real shame. The lettering is distracting, and even though Hayes now uses a clearer lettering font (as of #12), it's still a little "off." (The letters don't seem to fit properly in the word balloons.) Then there's the blatant spelling mistakes and blocks of white spaces between words that plague this book. An editor is very much needed and would solve these minor and annoying problems.

There are some fundamental problems as well. A number of characters (the Jester that is apparently in Lusiphur's mind) and concepts (Lusiphur's magical gun) are never explained. Knowing that tales of Lusiphur were told in Hayes' previous series *I, Lusiphur*, you get the feeling that these things have been touched upon before. Explaining them in some way would make this series more accessible to new readers, so they don't feel like they've missed something.

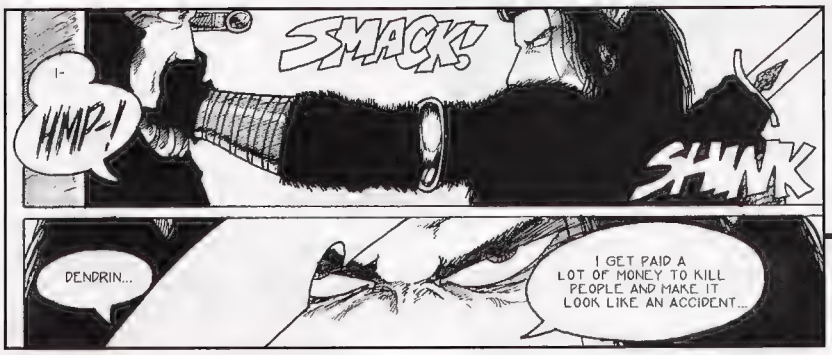
And while Hayes' art is gorgeous, it's also a bit sketchy at times, giving the appearance that it was rushed.

The Buzz: *Poison Elves* is currently a hot back-issue commodity, and expect more fans to sample this series with paperbacks due in spring and summer reprinting the early *I, Lusiphur* series.

The Skinny: This book deserves a better grading than what we're giving it. Unfortunately, it's got too many trivial mistakes (lettering, spelling errors, etc.) that detract from this otherwise *highly* enjoyable series.



At left: The relationship between Lusiphur and Cassandra is being handled beautifully



At left: Though a callous elven assassin, Lusiphur is ultimately a likeable character

The Verdict: 4

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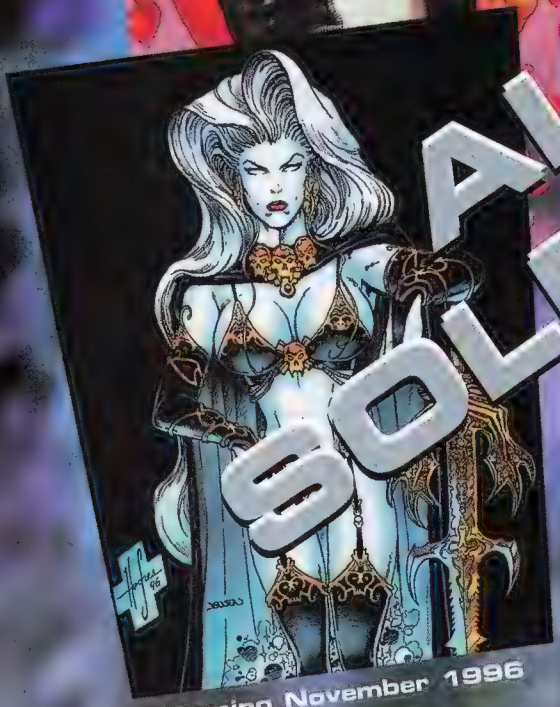

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PICKS

BEHOLD!

THEY'RE MAD, I TELL YOU!

THE MUST-READ COMICS SHIPPING IN JANUARY

AQUAMAN #30

ASTRO CITY #6

TITLES DENOTED WITH A **MR** CONTAIN MATERIAL THAT'S SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS.

AQUAMAN #30

DC COMICS Aquaman descends into the deepest, darkest, foulest place on Earth. No, not Wizard Press, silly. Artie's going to some nasty place known as "The Pit," populated by the ghosts of Atlantean kings, nightmarish creatures, crabs with Cajun accents and the Remnant, a creature that stagnated while every other life form on Earth evolved. By Peter "Who said anything about Cajun crabs?" David, Martin "What? Aquaman has crabs?" Egeland and Howard "Mmm…crabs." Shum. **$1.75**

ASTRO CITY (VOL2) #6

IMAGE Seems the folks of Astro City's Shadow Hill neighborhood aren't too happy with all of the ghosts and goblins, so they want 'em taken care of—permanent like. But how do the young superhero apprentice Brian and The Confessor tie into the whole mess? And how is it that a superhero named Brian isn't dead yet? By Kurt Busiek, Brent Anderson and Will Blyberg. **$2.50**

THE BATMAN AND ROBIN ADVENTURES #16

DC COMICS Catwoman accused of stealing from some of Gotham's wealthiest citizens? No surprise there, but the problem is she didn't do it, and having the whole mess pinned on her doesn't sit too well with Ms. Kyle. So what's a top-heavy villainous to do? Why, catch the real criminal and put a stomping on whoever's giving her a bad rap. By Ty Templeton, Brandon Kruse and Rick Burchett. Templeton says, "The opening page is almost beat-for-beat the first two minutes of Alfred Hitchcock's 'To Catch a Thief.' I tried to make it a caper movie where 17 people are stealing diamonds and only one of them gets away with it. I'm gonna say, even though I wrote it, it's a good read." **$1.75**

BATMAN: THE LONG HALLOWEEN #4 (OF 13)

DC COMICS The Joker's pissed because his territory in Gotham City has been invaded by the serial killer Holiday, and the laughing prince can't figure out who it is. So what's he do? He decides the only solution is to kill *everyone* in Gotham. That way, he'll take care of Holiday and once again have free reign in Gotham. You just can't argue with that kind of logic. By Jeph Loeb and Tim Sale. **$2.95**

THE BLACK LAMB #6 (OF 6)

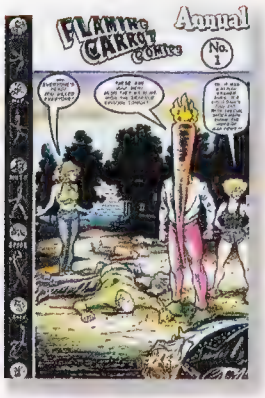
HELIX/DC After a slew of vicious vampire killings, even the police can't ignore what's happening. Commissioner Damn demands a meeting with the Black Lamb to find out if he knows who's behind the killings. The Black Lamb certainly knows—he's met the killer before, on not-so-friendly terms. So the Black Lamb and the Commish team up to take down the most vicious and ruthless vampire to ever have walked the earth. By Timothy Truman, Timothy Truman and Timothy Truman. **$2.50**

BRAINBANX #1 (OF 6)

HELIX/DC Ever hear voices in your head? Yeah? Whew, it's good to know we're not alone. Anna Elysian hears voices, too. And hers'

BATMAN: THE LONG HALLOWEEN #4

BRAINBANX #1



FLAMING CARROT ANNUAL #1

THE FLASH #123

are most definitely real. See, she's a telepath carrying someone else's consciousness around in her head. Someone like Ellis Shepard, who knows what's really going on at the ORC organization. Bad things. Like how animals are being grown with human brains. Ick. By Elaine Lee and Temujin. **$2.50**

DAREDEVIL #362

MARVEL "Radar sense warning me of a pan to the head!" See, DD's gal-pal Karen Page is a might miffed at the Man Without Fear. First off, Matt's old girlfriend the Black Widow is in town and he's been swingin' (literally) by her place too much...and now he might be startin' some trouble at the radio station where Karen works—the radio station owned by DD's old nemesis the Kingpin! By Karl Kesel, Cary Nord and Matt Ryan. **$1.95**

FLAMING CARROT ANNUAL #1

DARK HORSE GASP at the adventures of the world's only hero dressed as a giant flaming carrot! THRILL at his quest for the legendary Pork Chop Mine! MARVEL at the teeny Abe Lincoln! By Bob Burden, who says, "It's a humdinger of a story that we decided to put in an annual to celebrate the 15th anniversary of my adventure into self publishing. It's going to build for the *Mystery Men* series that's coming out, which is going to be like a *Stray Bullets* for superheroes. This [annual] is more like my earlier stories; it's very light and fun. I want to make people laugh. And if I made people laugh, I've done my job." **$5.00**

THE FLASH #123

DC COMICS He's the fastest man alive, but even the Flash can't be in two places at the same time. See, the Flash's new home of Santa Marta, Calif., is ripe with superhero things to do, but Linda, his gorgeous girlfriend, is back in Keystone City, so he's gotta devote some time to her, too. If we had to make the call, we'd let the Rainbow Raider go nuts and just play tonsil hockey with Linda. But that's just us. By Mark Waid, Brian Augustyn, Paul Ryan and John Nyberg. **$1.75**

GENERATION X #25

MARVEL That rat-bastard Black Tom Cassidy put a powerful hurtin' on Banshee and the White Queen and now wants control over the Gen X kids. Now, on the run and without the guidance of Sean and Emma, will the Gen Xers find a safe haven to read *Wired* and watch "Beetleborgs"? By Scott Lobdell and Chris Bachalo. **$2.99**

GREEN LANTERN #84

DC COMICS "Retribution," Part 2 (of 3). So how is Kyle handling Finality, the villain who wants his head on a plate? Not too bad. As it stands now, she just handed Kyle his ass, GL's power battery is gone and he's runnin' low on power. That and he got crabs from Aquaman. By Ron Marz, Darryl Banks and Romeo Tanghal. **$1.75**

HEARTLAND #1

VERTIGO/DC The former *Hellblazer* team revisits the John Constantine world (without John Constantine, unfortunately) in this 64-page one-shot. Centering on Kathy "Kit" Ryan, John Constantine's ex-lover, *Heartland* takes us on a journey through Belfast and Kit's childhood—two places that weren't very much fun. When Kit, her brother and three sisters all get together, the memories start flooding back, and we get to see just how disturbing some family life can be. By Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon. **MR $4.95**

HITMAN #12

DC COMICS It's the showdown no one in Gotham ever wanted to see: Hitman, Green Lantern and Tiegel go up against agents Truman, Feekle and their special government agents. The bullets, super weapons and fancy gadgets are gonna be flyin' all over Gotham. It's just a question of who's gonna come out on top. And

READ THIS BOOK!

AZTEK, THE ULTIMATE MAN #8

DC COMICS Aaaarrrgghhhh! Just when *Aztek* was starting to get a good buzz, DC decides to pull the plug and can the book as of #10! If you like the book, now's the time to get your rear in gear and save it. If you don't read *Aztek*, start now! The damn book is a riot! It stars a young hero trained from birth to be the one champion capable of defeating an ancient evil. Armed with dangerously powerful mystical armor and a far too trusting outlook on life, the naive Aztek usually finds himself in over his head in a world that he seldom understands. Trust us, it's a great read. If you like *Aztek* and want to see it continue, write DC and tell them how you feel (DC Comics, 1700 Broadway, New York, NY 10019). So c'mon. The clock's ticking. Get off your butt and make a difference! (Oh, and the book's by Grant Morrison, Mark Millar, N. Steven Harris and Keith Champagne.) Morrison says, "We finally get to see where Aztek came from, who he trained with, what he's all about, and also discover the big, *big* conspiracy behind what's he's doing. And it brings Lex Luthor into it—he's been deeply involved all along. We also meet Raptor—she's the warrior who's trained to take [Aztek's] place should anything go wrong." **$1.75**

you better believe Batman's gonna be *real* pissed when it's all over. By Garth Ennis and John McCrea. **$2.25**

IMPULSE #23

DC COMICS Max Mercury's pretty fed up. He's done all he can to teach Bart Allen how to be responsible with his powers, but Bart's as impulsive as ever. Just as Max is ready to throw in the towel, though, a new situation arises: A strange woman begins following Bart. By Mark Waid, Humberto Ramos and Wayne Faucher. **$1.75**

JACK KIRBY'S FOURTH WORLD #1

DC COMICS The worlds of New Genesis and Apokolips have merged, which is bound to cause some problems for the people living there. Plus, it's definitely going to catch the attention of Darkseid (and you don't want to get on his dark side...ba-da-bump). There are strange forces at work and it's going to take the talents of every superbeing on both worlds to figure out what's going on. By John Byrne. **$1.95**

JLA #3

DC COMICS This is one major kick-ass issue! Things ain't looking too good for the JLA: Superman's been reduced to a mere husk of his former self thanks to kryptonite; Martian Manhunter's apparently a turncoat; and the rest of the team is locked up in some deathtrap called the Flower of Wrath. The only one left is Batman. But can he take down the team that beat the JLA on his own? By Grant Morrison, Howard Porter and John Dell. **$1.95**

READ THIS BOOK!

SPAWN #58

IMAGE Remember *Spawn* #29? Well, you should, 'cause every kid on the friggin' planet seems to be readin' *Spawn*. Anyway, that's the one dealing with the abusive father of young Eddie and Andy. Ol' Spawny-guy branded "I Beat My Kids" all over the dad's body, and then left. Unfortunately, their dad got even madder, and in self-defense the kids shot and killed him. Now it seems Eddie and Andy have returned to Spawn's life. What do they want, and will Spawn be able to help them out this time? By Todd McFarlane and Greg Capullo. McFarlane says, "Spawn now faces perhaps the hardest decision since his return from Hell: What to do about these kids? They see Spawn as a hero. They have no home or source of income, and they're looking to Spawn for answers and guidance. Spawn's former military-trained mind dealt with the abusive situation as he saw fit, never taking the time to consider the full picture and the repercussions that would come with that choice. He put the meat on the grill and walked away. Now the meat is burnt." **$1.95**

GREEN LANTERN #84

HEARLAND #1

KANE #14

DANCING ELEPHANT PRESS The New Eden Police Department's got some new members, including Kate Felix. On her first day, Kate's got her hands full with escaped prisoners, muggers, con artists and the dregs of humanity. Hey, it's tough being a cop, but it's even tougher being a cop when you're only four years old! Sheesh. What's this world coming to? By Paul Grist. **$3.50**

LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES #90

DC COMICS Dr. Psycho is back and he's crazy! He's nutty! He's flipped his gourd! He attacks the Legion using Saturn Girl's telepathic powers to spread his dementia to everyone around, which ain't good for the rest of the Legionnaires. It's gonna be one insane battle that'll change a couple of the Legionnaires for good! By Tom Peyer, Tom McCraw, Lee Moder and Ron Boyd. **$2.25**

LEGIONNAIRES #46

DC COMICS Think the kids in the 20th century have it bad? Well look at what's going on in the 30th century. First, M'Onel's still looking for the Emerald Eye, but what he finds is something that nearly kills him. Then Kinetix is attacked...again. And finally, Dreamer lets the Legion in on some more of her weird visions. By Roger Stern, Tom McCraw, Jeffrey Moy, Philip Moy and W.C. Carani. **$2.25**

LOBO/MASK #2 (OF 2)

DC COMICS Lobo and the Mask jump on the trail of the previous Mask owner and end up falling into a Black Hole and going back in time. There they meet a previous version of Lobo who puts on the Mask! D'oh! Lobo by himself is bad enough. But with the power of the Mask, what in the name of all that's holy can stop him? By Alan Grant, John Arcudi, Doug Mahnke and Keith Williams. **$5.95**

LORDS OF MISRULE #1 (OF 6)

DARK HORSE This one's a real freaky read. Following the predictions of his insane brother, Jack Goodfellow returns to his birthplace in the village of Callow. There he learns about the myths of evil gods invading our world and finds that they might not be myths after all. A story that's definitely not for those afraid of the dark...or meat cleavers. By Dan Abnett, John Tomlinson, Steve White and Peter Snejbjerg. **MR $2.95**

MARS ATTACKS THE IMAGE UNIVERSE #2 (OF 4)

IMAGE The Martians unleash..."Them!" Yep, it ain't no nuclear

test that brings giant ants into the world this time, it's really those lousy Martians. Luckily, Witchblade and the rest of the Image Universe aren't about to let their picnic be ruined, so they kick some major Martian and ant ass. Look for Spawn, Savage Dragon and Gen[13] to join the fray. By Keith Giffen, Andy Smith and Bill Sienkiewicz. **$2.50**

NIGHTWING #6

DC COMICS Robin drops by Blüdhaven to see how Nightwing's doing. Now ain't that sweet? While there, they stake out a mob guy named Sonny Brewer. Unfortunately, the lawyer who gave them the tip on Sonny, squeals to his mob bosses. So when Robin and Nightwing move in on Sonny, they're greeted with a car bomb and a hail of bullets. Never trust a lawyer. By Chuck Dixon, Scott McDaniel and Karl Story. **$1.95**

POWER OF SHAZAM #24

DC COMICS Long before Billy ever met the great wizard Shazam, his father, C.C. Batson, was on a quest for The Scorpion, an artifact of great power. Unfortunately, Baron Blitzkrieg, that really evil Nazi guy (Grrr...we hate those ratzi bastards) is also looking for it. So where is it? Wouldja believe in Shazam's tomb? Yep, it's gonna be a doozy of a fight, with only one of them walking away with the prize. By Jerry Ordway, Peter Krause and Mike Manley. Ordway says, "It's kind of like a nice little side story with Spy Smasher and Billy's Dad. It doesn't have any cliffhangers *per se*, but it's certainly "Indiana Jones" inspired. The main thing about #24 is that it's kind of a jumping-off point for the kickoff of the third year, when we have a little time travel story with Dr. Sivana running from issue #25 to #27." **$1.75**

PREACHER #23

VERTIGO/DC "Crusaders," Part 5 (of 6). There's a prisoner in cell 99 who's got a real doozy of a tale to tell our buddy Jesse. But with the Saint of Killers hot on his trail, Jesse just don't got the time. And back in Masada, find out what the hell is loose and wandering around the compound. Whatever it is, it's bound to be disturbing. By Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon. **MR $2.50**

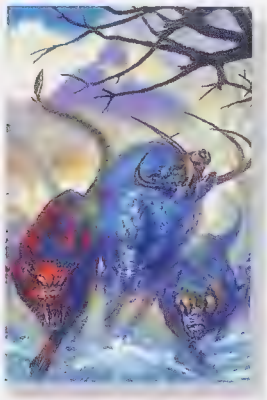
ROBIN #39

DC COMICS Robin's got more than his hands full after Slyfox comes to Gotham for some prime thieving. But when TV detective Roy Raymond Jr. gets a whiff of the story and goes after the thief, Robin's gotta keep him out of trouble, while trying to deal with Slyfox. By Chuck Dixon, Staz Johnson and Bob Smith. Dixon says, "The name of the story is 'Got Away Gone,' and it features Slyfox, a world class thief with a really bad attitude. In a way, it's kind of a parody on crime shows like 'True Crime' and 'America's Most Wanted.' It's got a really cool getaway sequence where Slyfox tries to evade the law in a way we've never seen before." **$1.95**

SANDMAN MYSTERY THEATRE #48

DC COMICS "The Blackhawk," Part 4 (of 4). Trouble's a-brewin' for Janos Prohaska (a.k.a. Blackhawk). He's got another murder rap pinned on him and the European Resistance is going crazy trying to get him convicted. Luckily, Sandman doesn't believe the stories and springs Prohaska from jail so they can unearth the truth. By Matt Wagner, Steven T. Seagle, Matthew Smith and Richard Case. **MR $2.50**

LEGIONNAIRES #46



LORDS OF MISRULE #1

PAPERBACK PICKS

Trade Paperbacks You Won't Wanna Miss

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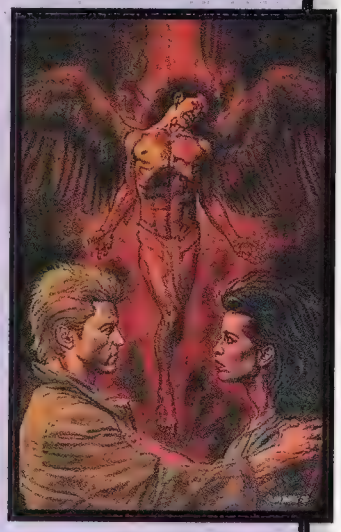
We can't praise this series enough. And now thanks to this spiffy trade paperback, you can get the first eight issues of *Untold Tales of Spider-Man*. It's full of good, old-fashioned, happy-go-lucky Spidey tales. It's just Peter Parker, teenager and superhero, plain and simple. See him struggle with his grades, tussle with his high school bullies and help his Aunt May make the month's rent, all while trying to save the world as Spider-Man. This is one paperback you absolutely don't want to miss. By Kurt Busiek, Pat Olliffe and Al Vey. **$16.99**

Hellblazer: Fear and Loathing (Vertigo/DC) ▼
Before they took the world by storm on *Preacher*, Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon did a long run on *Hellblazer*. Now you can read some pivotal issues (#62-#67) in the new *Fear and Loathing* trade paperback. You'll see John Constantine call up a dead relative for advice, watch his niece start to dabble in the dark mystical arts and witness an angel fall from the grace of Heaven. You'll even see Swamp Thing and Zatanna attend Constantine's 40th birthday party. (And wait'll ya see what Swampy gives him as a gift!) **$14.95**



Tales From The Bog: Year One (Aberration Press)
This trade paperback reprinting Marcus Lusk's *Tales From the Bog* #1-#4 contains some pretty neat and humorous stories. You'll see Jasper, Cozmo, Miz Jessie and all the rest of the gang as they go through their wacky daily adventures. If you haven't taken a look, you should, 'cause their stories are sure to give you a laugh. **$6.95**

PICKS

THE SPECTRE #51

DC COMICS The Spectre comes to Gotham City to do his vengeance thing and this time his wrath's directed at someone who has had it coming for quite a while: The Joker! But Batman, being the upstanding crimefighter that he is, can't quite allow the Joker to be killed. So it's showdown time. Hmm...a regular guy with a cape vs. the physical embodiment of the wrath of God. Tough call, but we're going with Batman. By John Ostrander and Tom Mandrake. Ostrander says, "The Joker has come to a club in New York City where everyone goes dressed as the Joker. The Joker's not that flattered, and that's where the Spectre finds him and Batman. And, because of some twist, the Joker ends up with the Spectre's power. That creates some...problems. But the Joker *will* receive punishment." **$2.50**

THE SPECTRE #51

UNTOLD TALES OF SPIDER-MAN #19

SPIDER-MAN: HOBGOBLIN LIVES! #3 (OF 3)

MARVEL Well, we got the truth about Peter Parker being the one true Spider-Man...and now we finally get to learn who the original Hobgoblin is. And when the truth comes out, you know the Hobgoblin and Peter are gonna don their tights and do some major fighting in the skies over New York. By Roger Stern, Ron Frenz and George Pérez. **$2.50**

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MARVEL Ladies and Gentlemen, please welcome, in his first *Untold Tales* appearance ever—Dr. Otto Octavius, the incredible Dr. Octopus! No, he's not back from the dead (thank God), he's just showing up courtesy of this really spiffy retro comic. While he's running from the cops, ol' Otto decides to lay low in friendly Forest Hills. Wait a minute...that's where Spidey lives! Uh-oh, there's gonna be a fiiiiiight. By Kurt Busiek, Pat Olliffe and Al Williamson. **99 CENTS**

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IMAGE Well, the 'C.A.T.s have finally put an end to the gang war that was raging in New York, but now they've got another problem. Seems one o' the bad guys got hold of a nuclear bomb and is planning to set it off. Regardless of the outcome, one member of the team ain't comin' back alive. By Alan Moore, Mat Broome and Troy Hubbs. **$2.50** W

AT A GLANCE

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It's the final knock-down, drag-out fight between the Hulk and the Avengers. **$1.95**

Batman #540 (DC)
Spectre goes to Gotham on the trail of a murderer who he thinks is Batman. **$1.95**

Captain America #5 (Marvel)
Cap and Bucky beat up everyone at the World Party, but now Crossbones wants to mix it up with them. **$1.95**

Chastity: Theatre of Pain #1 (Chaos!)
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Curse of the Spawn #5 (Image)
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Daredevil/Batman (Marvel)
Batman follows Two-Face to New York and tussles with Daredevil in the process. **$5.99**

DV8 #4 (Image)
Get a look into the mind of Threshold after Ivana pumps him full of drugs. **$2.50**

Fantastic Four #5 (Marvel)
Check out this plot: it's the Fantastic Four vs. Doctor Doom! Maybe they'll jump in Doom's time machine and return to the Pre-"Heroes Reborn" Universe. **$1.95**

Gen^{13} Bootleg #3 (Image)
Set in a mystical land, Lynch brings in a team of superpowered kids to defeat the evil sorceress Ivana. **$2.50**

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It's the Hulk vs. Pitt, with Rick Jones and Timmy coaching from the sidelines. **$5.99**

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It's Tony Stark vs. Whirlwind. That's right, Tony Stark. No armor, just his wits. **$1.95**

Spider-Man Books (Marvel)
Sensational Spider-Man #14 **($1.95)** brings Spidey and Ka-Zar into battle with the Mole Man and the Hulk. In *Amazing Spider-Man #421* **($1.95)**, the villainess called Dragonfly buzzes onto the scene. *Peter Parker, Spider-Man #78* **($1.95)** gives us a look at Spidey through Mary Jane's eyes. And *Spectacular Spider-Man #244* **($1.95)** sees the Chameleon battle Spidey for the lives of Dr. Kafka and John Jameson.

Star Wars Books (Dark Horse)
In *Boba Fett—Twin Engines of Destruction* **($2.95)** Fett sets out to kill his impersonator. *Tales of the Jedi—the Golden Age of the Sith #4* **($2.95)** shows the tortures Jori and Gav Daragon are subjected to by the Sith. In *X-Wing Rogue Squadron—The Warrior Princess #3* **($2.95)** it's a fight for the crown while the Empire builds its forces for an attack.

Superman Books (DC)
Superman: Man of Steel #65 **($1.95)** shows just how long Superman can fight the Superman Revenge Squad. *Superman #121* **($1.95)** gives us a look at the lives of those who live in Metropolis' Suicide Slums. In *Adventures of Superman #544* **($1.95)** someone's killed Clark Kent in broad daylight! *Action Comics #731* **($1.95)** sees the villain called Cauldron return with an all-new programming. And *Superman: The Man of Tomorrow #8* **($1.95)** has Supes face off against Carbide, the villain with rock-hard skin.

Uncanny X-Men #342 (Marvel)
The X-Men jaunt off into space to find out who's destroying the Shi'Ar Empire. **$1.95**

Vampirella Lives #2 (Harris)
Vampirella returns from the dead with intent to kill Mistress Nyx. **$2.95**

Wolverine #111 (Marvel)
Wolvie moves to New York City and meets a vicious new villain. **$1.95**

X-Files #26 (Topps)
Mulder and Scully have an alien aircraft in their possession, and the government's willing to kill them to get it. **$2.95**

X-Man #25 (Marvel)
It's Madelyne Prior vs. Jean Grey and Cyclops, with Nate caught in the middle. **$2.99**

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TRAILER PARK

Wizard's column about Hollywood and TV and stuff like that

SPAWN LIVE-ACTION FILM LOOKING GOOD

By Rob Allstetter

Early word from the set of the **"Spawn"** live-action movie: The translation from comic book to film is going to work.

"It's been amazing," first-time director Mark Dippe told *Wizard* after a recent day's shooting at the Hollywood Center Studios. "We're making a good movie and an interesting film. We're bringing the character to life in a way that is working. Making some of the interesting scenes work has been really exciting."

By press time, principal photography of some 70 days should have been completed.

The effects-laden film, from New Line Cinema with a budget of some $40 million, now goes into extensive post-production, with ILM providing effects. "Spawn" is scheduled to be in theaters next August.

Spawn creator **Todd McFarlane** is executive producer, and has visited the set several times. As you might expect, he has been actively involved since pre-production, working with Dippe and producer Clint Goldman.

"We're achieving what we set out to do with the script," McFarlane said on the set.

The screenplay, by Alan McElroy, with revisions by Dippe, incorporates many elements of the *Spawn* comic. Al Simmons is an operative of the government organization A-6 who is betrayed and killed by his boss, Jason Wynn. He returns five years later as Spawn, only to discover that his beloved Wanda Blake has married his best friend, Terry Fitzgerald, and has a daughter, Cyan.

While the Clown (a.k.a. the Violator) tries to goad Spawn into evil, Cogliostro tries to mentor Spawn through his anguish to develop his freakish powers and do the right thing.

FROM THE SET OF "SPAWN," LEGUIZAMO'S CLOWN (ABOVE) AND WHITE'S SPAWN (RIGHT)

But there isn't a lot of time. It turns out the Clown has been in cahoots with Wynn all along. Their plan: to unleash a terrible bio-chemical weapon called HEAT-16 that could ravage the planet. It's up to Spawn to overcome his inner turmoil and thwart the pair, which leads to a climatic battle, with lots of effects-driven Violator vs. Spawn action.

The cast of "Spawn" includes Michael Jai White as Al Simmons/Spawn, John Leguizamo as the Clown, Martin Sheen as Jason Wynn, D.B. Sweeney as Terry Fitzgerald, Theresa Randle as Wanda and as Nicol Williamson as Cogliostro. The Violator appears via special effects and three large puppets.

There are, however, differences from the comics.

Sweeney, who is white, plays Terry Fitzgerald, who is African-American in the comics. "The reasons [for this change] are many, but it's a lot about the quirkiness of who's right for the role," said Dippe.

You won't be seeing Chapel in the movie. Instead, a white woman named Priest (played by Melinda Clarke) does Wynn's dirty work. McFarlane said Priest will be brought into the *Spawn* comics before the film arrives.

Another supporting character is Zack, a homeless kid played by Miko Hughes, who befriends Spawn and Spawn's dog Spaz (named after the film's special effects wizard, Steve "Spaz" Williams).

"It adds a bit of a kid element in the movie," McFarlane said. "We want a PG-13 movie, and the thought is that [Zack] makes it a little more accessible."

Zack's abusive father, Glen, has a run-in with the Violator. The father is played by Michael Papajohn. Detectives Burke and Twitch have minor roles in the film and might not make the final cut.

And Spawn will not wear a cape for most of the film, although one will pop out at certain times from his symbiotic suit, which has a very organic look. "To me, a cape says superhero, and I wanted more sci-fi," said McFarlane. "I was the guy willing to make the most changes from the comic books."

Both White and Leguizamo went through extensive makeup sessions to bring Spawn and the Clown to life. The three-hour process Leguizamo went through was recently featured on the television series "Access Hollywood."

Although White's burnt-face look—affectionately known as "Hamburgerhead" on the set—was less time-consuming to put together than the Clown's, it was part of a grueling role for White, who previously starred in the HBO film "Tyson."

"It's been interesting, but what was unforeseen was just how physical this would be," said White, who was getting ready to be strapped up against a fence for several hours.

McFarlane and Dippe both told *Wizard* they have been pleased with the cast.

"Working with the actors to bring these guys to life...I love that," Dippe said.

An industry trailer for "Spawn" was completed in late October to show to foreign markets. It included scenes of White as Simmons, his burning death at the hands of Wynn, a manic Leguizamo as the Clown, Simmons falling down a computer-generated burning tunnel to Hell, an action sequence with Spawn on a motorcycle, and finally, a computer-generated Violator poised over Spawn. The trailer ends with the Spawn logo afire.

"I want something that's cool, it's dark, it's mysterious, it's funny at times, it's kind of sensitive," said McFarlane. "Even though it's from a comic book, it has a more intelligent, sophisticated sensibility—given that it's still a guy in a costume with superpowers. It's not campy."

Like most comics-to-movies projects, "Spawn" is viewed as a franchise. McFarlane told *Wizard* it will probably be determined within a month after the film's release if there will be a sequel.

BATMAN 2, MEDIA 0

Forget Mr. Freeze. Never mind Poison Ivy. The Dark Knight's greatest opponent in the upcoming **"Batman and Robin"** film appears to be the media. Two separate incidents involving the film and the press made headlines recently.

After illegally obtained footage from the set of "Batman and Robin" was aired on "Inside Edition," security on the Warner Bros. lot set up a "sting operation," which led to the arrest of three men trying to film activities on the set.

"It was **Arnold Schwarzenegger**'s first day as Mr. Freeze. We knew they would be there, and, sure enough, they showed up," director Joel Schumacher told CNN. "[One] guy walked right up to Arnold, had a camera strapped to his ankle and took 36 photos. We arrested them right outside the stage.

"It's a violation. They lied, they stole, they used fake badges to come on Warner Bros. property, and they passed themselves off as people they were not."

Producer Peter Macgregor-Scott said that, through the first seven weeks of filming of "Batman and Robin," 30 cameras, 52 rolls of film and four video cameras had been confiscated by Warner Bros. security.

"We have an extremely high level of security, and when it's breached to such a degree, we put all our resources into finding out what happened," Macgregor-Scott said.

And while saying there was "a certain victory" in nabbing the three men, Schumacher was not completely satisfied.

"My only regret is that the people who paid for this [illegally obtained video] should also be considered criminals," Schumacher said.

"Inside Edition" would not reveal its source for the four-minute segment it aired in October.

The second incident with the media involved **George Clooney**, the star of "ER" who is replacing Val Kilmer in the roles of Bruce Wayne and Batman.

Clooney made a successful stand against video paparazzi. He was upset after a segment on Paramount's "Hard Copy" involved his girlfriend, and he broke an agreement he had with Frank Kelly, the president of Paramount TV Group, to not appear on "HC" in exchange for access on "Entertainment Tonight."

Clooney's response was an angry letter and a boycott of "Entertainment Tonight," Paramount's sister show of "Hard Copy."

"No interviews from this date on," he said in the letter to Linda Bell Blue, executive producer of "ET." "Nothing from 'ER,' nothing from 'One Fine Day,' nothing from 'Batman and Robin,' and nothing from DreamWorks' first film, 'The Peacemaker.' Those interviews will be reserved for all press but you."

Clooney's move drew support in the Hollywood community, including Dean Cain, star of ABC's "Lois & Clark: The New Adventures of Superman," and Paramount issued a statement saying it would restrict the use of footage purchased from paparazzi.

In other quick Bat-news:

Schwarzenegger revealed on "The Tonight Show with Jay Leno" that he is wearing a bald cap as Mr. Freeze.

In January, production will move to Vermont, where a quarry hole will be made into a 200-foot ice wall, according to *Entertainment Weekly*.

LIVE FROM DISNEY, IT'S GEN[13]!

Jim Lee's WildStorm Productions has entered into an agreement with Walt Disney Pictures and SweetPea Entertainment for a live-action, theatrical **"Gen[13]"** film.

The film will be produced by Courtney Solomon and John Benitez of SweetPea, a Beverly Hills/Hong Kong-based production company. SweetPea's other projects include a live-action version of "Dungeons and Dragons" and "The Descendant," a horror thriller which the company plans on turning into a franchise.

Lee will serve as executive producer on the "Gen[13]" film.

Disney will also distribute the straight-to-video "Gen[13]" animated movie, written, directed and produced by Kevin Altieri. Domestic distribution of the film, expected next summer, will be through Disney's Buena Vista Home Video.

MIGHTY MARVEL UPDATE

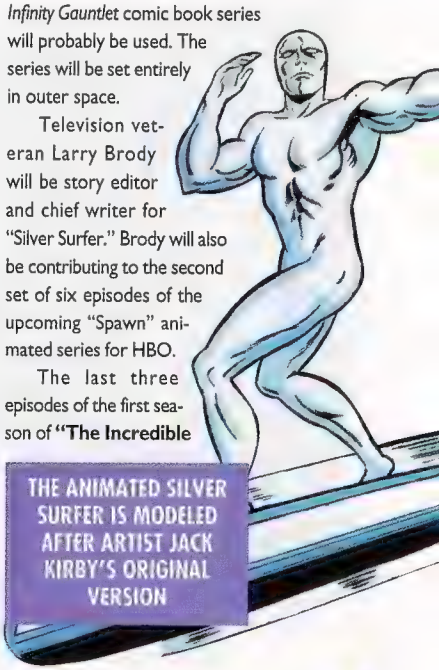
The **"Silver Surfer"** animated series, now in development at Saban Entertainment, is being targeted to start as a special on Fox in November 1997 and as a regular Saturday morning series in February of 1998.

A source told *Wizard* "Silver Surfer" will have a "very Jack Kirby-like feel" in terms of line work and textures. Computer graphic animation will also likely be used.

Among the characters likely to appear are Galactus, the Watcher, the Skrulls, the Kree, Shalla Bal, Beta Ray Bill, Thanos, Nebula, Pip the Troll and Lady Chaos. An episode will be devoted to the Surfer's Zenn-La origin, and elements of the *Infinity Gauntlet* comic book series will probably be used. The series will be set entirely in outer space.

Television veteran Larry Brody will be story editor and chief writer for "Silver Surfer." Brody will also be contributing to the second set of six episodes of the upcoming "Spawn" animated series for HBO.

The last three episodes of the first season of **"The Incredible**



THE ANIMATED SILVER SURFER IS MODELED AFTER ARTIST JACK KIRBY'S ORIGINAL VERSION

Hulk" animated series on the United Paramount Network will feature a three-part story entitled "Darkness and Light." Among the events in the final three episodes are:

• The Leader making his major move and having the Gargoyle put his mind into the Hulk's body.

• Doc Samson and Betty Ross using the nutrient bath to split apart Bruce Banner and the Hulk, only to learn the two will die without each other.

• Rick Jones falling into the nutrient bath and becoming a Hulk.

• Banner, in an exo-armor, battling the Hulk.

Bob Forward, who has written most of the episodes in the first season, wrote part one; Steve and Cynde Granat, story editors on the second season of "Fantastic Four," wrote part two; and Greg Johnson, story editor of the series, wrote part three.

Spoiler warning: The first season will end in a cliffhanger, with the emergence of...the gray Hulk! "We had to fight for that," Johnson said. "They didn't want to leave on a cliffhanger, but everyone's confident that there will be a second season."

UPN has been touting the strong ratings of "The Incredible Hulk," so a second season seems likely. However, it remains to be seen if Marvel's recent deal with Fox will play a role in the future of the show.

One of the final six, newly designed episodes of Fox's **"X-Men"** animated series, "Jubilee's Fairy Tale Theater," aired in November. The episode also featured a new, un-credited actor doing the voice of Gambit.

The remaining five new episodes of "X-Men," which will include appearances by Captain America, Cannonball, Mr. Sinister, Apocalypse and Magneto, and different looks for several characters, will likely air in either February or May.

Films based on **Namor, the Sub-Mariner** and **Thor** have been added to Marvel's slate of projects in development. Expect a major announcement from the Big M soon on several movie projects.

DEACON FROST (ABOVE) WILL FACE OFF AGAINST BLADE (PLAYED BY WESLEY SNIPES)

DORFF BATTLES SNIPES IN "BLADE"

Stephen Dorff will co-star with **Wesley Snipes** in New Line Cinema's **"Blade"** movie, based on the Marvel Comics' vampire hunter, sources have confirmed for *Wizard*.

Dorff, 23, will play Deacon Frost, the vampire lord and Blade's nemesis in the film. Dorff is also starring in "Blood and Wine," in which he plays the son of Jack Nicholson's character. He recently completed "City of Industry" with Harvey Keitel and "Space Truckers" with Dennis Hopper. His credits also include "I Shot Andy Warhol."

According to *Daily Variety*, Dorff will be paid a seven-figure sum for the role.

"Blade" is expected to go before the cameras by late January or early February. The film will be directed by Steve Norrington ("Death Machine") from a script by David Goyer ("The Crow: City of Angels"). Stan Lee and Avi Arad will executive-produce, Peter Frankfurt will produce and Bob Engelman will be the line producer.

Sources told *Wizard* that Snipes is now also in "advanced discussions" to play the **Black Panther** in a live-action film. Snipes has been linked to the role before, but the development process on "Black Panther" has started all over with a new script in the works.

HAMILL'S BLACK PEARL

With his *The Black Pearl* comic book series concluding from Dark Horse in January, **Mark Hamill** has been working with his cousin Eric Johnson on fine-tuning "The Black Pearl" movie screenplay, which was the original source for the comic.

Hamill told *Wizard* he wants to direct the film. "We've had at least one solid offer to buy it away from us, but it was hard enough to pick somebody to draw the comic," Hamill said. "I feel like I know the characters the best."

Hamill, best known as Luke Skywalker from the "Star Wars" movies, has been working with Charlie Lippincott, who will likely produce the movie, in preparing it to pitch to studios.

"He's someone who I met 19 years ago—he was the marketing director of the first George Lucas movie I did," Hamill said. "He's someone who knows so many things about both movies and about comic books."

Hamill also continues his work in voice animation; his latest role is in the upcoming prime-time "The Blues Brothers" on UPN. With 21 new episodes of **"The Adventures of Batman and Robin"** in production for Kids WB next season, Hamill will reprise his Joker role for at least two episodes: an adaptation of the *Mad Love* comic book story and a "World's Finest" story involving Superman and Lex Luthor.

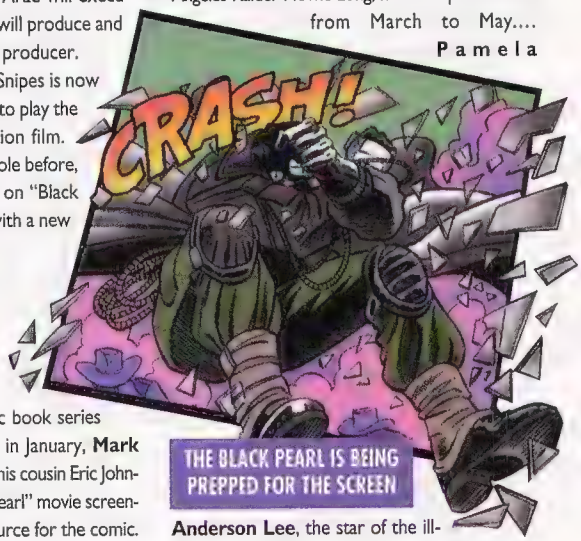
"Color me Mort Weisinger-happy," Hamill laughed.

Hamill's other prominent animation roles currently are Blair on "Wing Commander" and the Gargoyle on "The Incredible Hulk." He's also done the voice of Threshold in the straight-to-video "Gen13" movie.

SHORT TAKES

"The Crow: City of Angels" was released on home video on Dec. 2. The home-video version of the Miramax film was called "a director's cut," with five minutes of extra material from the theatrical version. After seven weeks of release, "The Crow: City of Angels" had taken in $17.4 million at the box office....Jean MacCurdy, president of Warner Bros. Animation and Kids WB, will now also be overseeing the **Hanna-Barbera** animation studio as part of the folding of Hanna-Barbera into Warner Bros....The production start of the **"Black Cross"** film, based on the Dark Horse comic and starring former Los Angeles Raider Howie Long, has been pushed back from March to May....

Pamela Anderson Lee, the star of the ill-fated "Barb Wire" movie and the syndicated television series "Baywatch," has filed for divorce from her husband, Mötley Crüe drummer, Tommy Lee....According to *The Hollywood Reporter*, Canada's Nelvana is developing **"Barbarella,"** based on the French comic book and Jane Fonda movie, into a television series....Kids WB pulled "Freakazoid!" and "Earthworm Jim" from its Saturday morning lineup in November, replacing them with a new "Daffy Duck" show and a second helping of "Animaniacs." "Freakazoid!" and "Earthworm Jim" moved to Friday afternoons....Fox has ordered nine more episodes of **"Millennium,"** giving the successful first-year show a full season of 22 episodes....**Richard Dean Anderson**, formerly of "MacGyver," has signed to star in "StarGate SG-1," a new series for Showtime and syndication. Forty-four episodes of the hour-long series, which is based on the 1995 movie, have been ordered. The series is expected to begin on Showtime in July. W

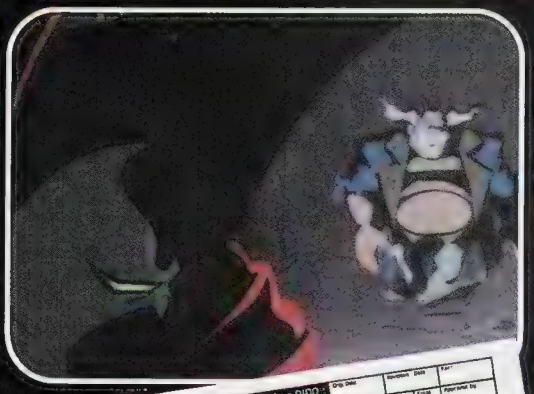


THE BLACK PEARL IS BEING PREPPED FOR THE SCREEN

Rob Allstetter feels really terrible about pushing Rick Jones into that nutrient bath.

TRAILER PARK

SPECIAL REPORT



SPAWN GETS ANIMATED

"The weird thing between the 'Spawn' [live-action] movie and the animated series is that the movie is PG-13, but the animation will be R-rated," says *Spawn* creator Todd McFarlane.

That's right, R-rated. We're talking violence, profanity, nudity and sexual situations. The six episodes brought to HBO on late Friday nights this spring will tackle the kind of material that could only be seen on cable TV.

"We're trying to do something that's very adult—*not* for kids—and take it to a certain level of storytelling that's not generally expected in animation," says Catherine Winder, vice president of HBO's newly formed animation division and a producer of "Spawn." "It's pretty heavy stuff—and no one's asked us to pull back."

Winder brought in Eric Radomski, a producer/director of Fox's acclaimed "Batman: The Animated Series," as supervising director on "Spawn."

"I'm confident," says Radomski, "that if we can maintain the quality of the production values on the show, it's a breakthrough series."

The first six episodes will be serialized in nature, although each episode can stand on its own. They'll include Al Simmons' arrival on Earth as Spawn, as well as the case of child killer Billy Kincaid, who's portrayed in the TV series as the son of a senator.

"I wanted to do a story that dealt with corruption and how power politics could allow an individual to cover up something that would put them above the law," says Alan McElroy, primary writer and co-executive producer of the series.

"Billy Kincaid is being protected by a political figure who has connections with [CIA player] Jason Wynn—and that spirals back to [mob boss] Tony Twist. There's sort of a large circle that encompasses a lot of the primary characters in the Spawn Universe."

And that circle includes Chapel, the man who killed Al Simmons.

"We introduce Chapel," McElroy says, "but I didn't want him to come into confrontation in the first six episodes. I wanted to set up that Chapel's out there. As Wynn begins to realize that there's this force out there called Spawn, he calls Chapel back to return to the United States. At the end of episode six, you get the feeling that Chapel is back, and there is a confrontation between Chapel and Spawn coming."

Spawn's voice is done by Keith David, who won an Emmy Award for his voice work on "Gargoyles."

"He's just Spawn," says Winder of David. "I've never worked with anybody who gets it on the first take like he does."

The cast also includes Richard Dysart ("L.A. Law") as the voice of Cogliostro, Victor Love as Terry Fitzgerald, Dominique Jennings as Wanda Blake, John Rafter Lee as Jason Wynn, Michael Nicolosi as the Clown, Jamie Hanes as Overt-Kill and Violator, Ruben Santiago Hudson as Chapel, Denise Poirior as Angela, Jimmy Keane as Tony Twist, Ronny Cox as Billy Kincaid and Senator MacMillan, and Michael McShane as Twitch and Gareb.

Scripts for six more episodes have been ordered by HBO, but as of press time, they had not yet been green-lighted for production. ■ *RA*

Amy Eno/HBO

HBO'S WINDER AND RADOMSKI CONSPIRE TO MAKE THE ANIMATED "SPAWN" A BREAKTHROUGH SERIES

scene

A guide to Japanese comics and animation

by Carl Gustav Horn

I Want My Anime TV!

Companies turn to multi-part anime TV series on video

To be long or short, that is the question. On anime, that is.

While 90 percent of anime footage is taken from multi-part episodic TV shows, the American home video market for anime has largely been dominated by anime movies and one-shots like "Akira" or short-series OAV (original anime video, which is anime made straight to video). And that's about to change, though the trend is not without its risks.

One primary reason one-shot anime videos have made business sense is that a U.S. company would have to invest in an untested Japanese TV series that might be dozens (or even *hundreds*) of episodes in length. But a few companies, such as AnimEigo and Streamline, have taken the plunge with "Kimagure Orange Road" and "Babel II," respectively. And now other companies, for the first time, are following their lead by releasing episodic TV shows on video, mostly because the supply of unacquired OAVs and movies that have been a mainstay for years is drying up.

As video manufacturers such as Central Park Media and Software Sculptors now weigh in with such lengthy TV '80s mecha classics as "Votoms," "Patlabor," or "Dancougar," Pioneer brings out the TV versions of their successful OAV series "Tenchi Muyo!" and "El Hazard." Manga Entertainment looks ahead to its release next February of the 1995 anime TV series based on the mega-hit videogame *Street Fighter II*.

The pioneers in this field, Viz and AnimEigo, make an excellent comparison study. Their testing of the market has been a long-term experiment: both companies have, over the last three years, attempted to promote very lengthy TV series based on the work of Japan's most successful female manga artist, Rumiko Takahashi. Yet where Viz has found steady and expanding success with its "Ranma 1/2" series, AnimEigo has had a hard time with Takahashi's "Urusei Yatsura."

Though 161 episodes in length, "Ranma 1/2" is successful on video because each tape stands on its own

Viz's successful approach has not been without controversy, as Trish Ledoux, Viz's supervisor of translation and scriptwriting, readily acknowledges. Her strategy to maintain audience interest in a 161-episode sitcom is to make each two-episode volume self-contained. "Instead of calling volumes 'Ranma Vol. 17, 18...' etc., we come up with titles for each volume, often based on some pop-culture joke such as 'Desperately Seeking Shampoo,' " says Ledoux. "In addition to that, we create artificial 'seasons' for 'Ranma' in the sense that we identify story arcs and then call one, for example, 'Hard Battle.' We have great confidence in the show itself, but our marketing has been directed towards the 'mainstream,' which is really the ever-expanding market of new fans."

AnimEigo's push of "Urusei Yatsura" began with certain advantages. In Japan, it's the series that really made Takahashi a star, and is considered there to be more of a classic than "Ranma." And in America, it's gotten pop-culture cachet from MTV, with excerpts of it popping up in the Matthew Sweet video "I've Been Waiting" (that, incidentally, helped to make *him* a star), as well as MTV's "Squirt TV." But "Urusei Yatsura" also tied one hand behind AnimEigo's back, for it's even more of a monster than "Ranma," topping out at over *200* episodes.

The single most important difference between Viz and AnimEigo seems to have been that AnimEigo, long considered the most friendly and considerate of the companies towards old-time fans, counted mainly on its established fans

Manga Entertainment looks to dragon punch competitors with its "Street Fighter II" anime video series

to make "Urusei Yatsura" a success, and, unlike Viz, didn't reach out to a larger audience with a dubbed version until late in the game. Nor has AnimEigo adopted the strategy of "subdividing" their even longer series as Viz has with "Ranma," going instead with consecutive volume numbers.

AnimEigo President Robert Woodhead's experience with this problem has left him a bit fatalistic about the whole issue, in contrast to Ledoux: "Basically, what you quickly find out is that after the first few tapes, your sales drop to the hard-core fan base that will buy *all* the tapes. Thereafter, the sales will remain constant. Some people drop out, other people discover the series, get hooked and buy them all over a period of time. This market is very different from the movies/short OVA series market."

With these lessons comes a concluding word of warning for the fans who might make the mistake of not pursuing older anime TV shows that may not have the quality of a modern anime movie. As with comic books, flashy graphics are no substitute for a good story and interesting characters—and an episodic anime TV show allows the chance to develop those very ingredients. Moreover, a good number of OAVs have just been re-makes of older TV shows, and many more OAVs have been influenced by them. The series, only now becoming available, represent a whole new era of discovery for American anime fans. Get out there and explore! W

Carl Horn wants to appear on "Squirt TV" and kick the crap outta that annoying Veejay kid. Then maybe meet Daisy Fuentes...

picks of the month

manga

Mangajin

(Mangajin, Inc., $5.50, 10 issues yearly, b&w, 104 pgs.)

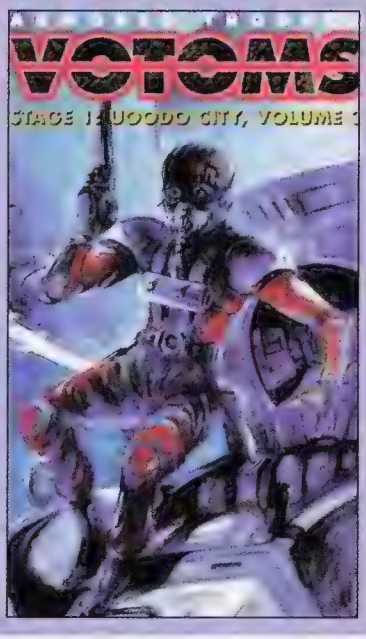
Manga in Japan cover a wide range of genres beside science-fiction and fantasy. A good example of alternative manga is a magazine called *Mangajin* ("manga man"), going strong for five years now from its publisher in Marietta, Ga. Rather than being aimed at comics fans, *Mangajin* is published for businessmen who want to learn Japanese, and aside from articles, it contains excepts of manga printed in its original form with translations in the margin. *Mangajin* features interesting stories—the kind that sell millions in Japan, that you won't find from Dark Horse, Antarctic or Viz: tales of the gritty world of Osaka loan sharks, or the Japanese family courts, or what it's like to be a working woman in Japan. You even get to see the other way around: how famous American comics like *Calvin and Hobbes* or *The Far Side* struggle to get the joke across in Japanese.

anime

Armored Trooper Votoms

(U.S. Manga Corps, subtitled, multiple volumes of 72 or 50 mins. ea., $24.95, now available)

Relatively few of the great '80s anime mecha shows have made it to U.S. video until recently, but Central Park Media is going a long way towards correcting that with "Armored Trooper Votoms," which caused a sensation in Japan in 1983 with its stripped-down, four-meter tall piloted battlesuits that looked like they could be real military hardware. The mood of the futuristic show goes along with its blunt, deadly armored troopers. Chirico Cuvie is an "A.T." (Armored Trooper) pilot and veteran of the war that has long tortured the Astragius Galaxy. He's a man tough as nails and harder than hell. Betrayed by his commanders during an illegal mission and left to die, he instead makes his way to the subterranean pit of Uoodo City, where he has to battle both to survive and uncover the star-spanning conspiracy that almost cost him his life...and may yet hunt him down. "Uoodo City" is the first story arc of "Votoms," and is available as five separate tapes or in a boxed set. The second story arc, "Kummen Jungle Wars," is also now available.



People Who Care Present:

The Bookshelf o' Comics contest

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We want you to dress up like Baby New Year — with the big diaper and sash across your torso reading "1997"—and get your photo taken wearing this garb in a comic store (or, if there isn't a comic store near you, a photo near a comic display in any store will do). Then attach your name and address to the back of the photo, mail it in, and a random drawing among all entries will determine who wins our…

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Over 200 different soft- and hardcover comic collections, a big bookshelf to stick them in *and* your very-own, one-of-a-kind **original art bookmark**, featuring Gladiator art from Chuck Wojtkiewicz (artist of Marvel's *Imperial Guard*) and Flash art from Mike Wieringo (cover artist of DC's *The Flash*).

And it ain't like the books you're getting are gonna be cheese or anything. You'll get *Lady Death: Between Heaven and Hell* (Chaos!), *Concrete: Fragile Creature* (Dark Horse), *Watchmen* (DC Comics), *Battlestar Galactica* (Maximum Press) and *Fantastic Four: The Trial of Galactus* (Marvel). You'll even get foreign-edition books from Dark Horse! *Strangers in Paradise: I Dream of You* autographed by Terry Moore! *Madman: The Oddity Odyssey* autographed by Mike Allred! A *Lady Death: The Reckoning* hardcover autographed by Brian Pulido, Steven Hughes and Jason Jensen!

This list is nigh-endless!!

This contest is sponsored by Chaos! Comics, Dark Horse Comics, DC Comics, Extreme Studios/Maximum Press, Marvel Comics, Terry Moore, Mike Allred and Mike 'n' Chuck. Them's nice people.

Legal Volume

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, the listed sponsors, their immediate families or anybody who thinks the comic book medium is not a legitimate art form. Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip and telephone number with area code on the official entry form or a 3-by-5-inch index card and attach your photo. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry separately to: Bookshelf o' Comics Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted, but you can photocopy the entry form before filling it out if you don't want to mess up your magazine. All entries become property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winner. No cash equivalent or substitute prize will be offered. Prize is awarded in the name of the contest winner and is not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. Any pictures showing body hair we don't wanna see will be immediately disqualified. And burned. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by February 28, 1997.** Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Prize winner will be selected by random drawing from among all properly completed entries by Wizard Press. Drawing will take place on March 17, 1997.

For name of the winner, available after March 17, 1997, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Bookshelf o' Comics Winner, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

Fill this out, put it in an envelope and send it to: Bookshelf o' Comics Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

Deadline is February 28, 1997.

Bookshelf o' Comics Entry Form

DEADLINE IS FEBRUARY 28, 1997!

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number (with area code) _____

Did you attach your Dorky-ass photo?

CHARACTER PROFILE:

Batman

BY MATTHEW BRADY

VITAL STATS

REAL NAME: Bruce Wayne
AGE: early 30s
HEIGHT: 6' 2"
WEIGHT: 210 lbs.
HAIR COLOR: black
EYE COLOR: blue
FIRST APPEARANCE: (original version) *Detective Comics* #27 in 1939; (modern version) *Batman* #404 in 1986
TITLES CURRENTLY APPEARING IN: *Batman, Detective Comics, Batman: Shadow of the Bat, Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight, Batman Chronicles, Batman: The Long Halloween* and *JLA*
MAJOR ENEMIES: The Joker, Two-Face, Ra's al Ghul, The Penguin, The Riddler, Poison Ivy, Bane and Mister Freeze

ORIGIN

As a boy, Bruce Wayne witnessed the cold-blooded murder of his parents in a back-alley mugging. Young Bruce was forever changed that night, and swore an oath on his parents' grave that he would do everything in his power to make sure that criminals would no longer prey on innocents. To this end, Bruce dedicated his life to training his mind and body to perfection. When he turned 18, Bruce began utilizing his family's vast fortune and traveled around the world, learning all he could from masters of combat, including manhunting, disguise and detective skills.

Returning to his home of Gotham City years later, Wayne began to fight crime, but quickly realized that all his training was still not enough. While he recuperated at his home, Wayne Manor, after a near-fatal encounter in Gotham's infamous East End, Wayne was startled by an enormous bat breaking through the window of his study. Taking the bat as a sign, Wayne designed a costume in order to strike fear in the hearts of criminals, and the Batman was born.

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING

Since his initial appearance in Gotham, Batman has generated a huge gallery of bizarre villains, from the seemingly amusing and harmless Tweedledee and Tweedledum, to the grotesque and misunderstood Man-Bat and Killer Croc, to the unpredictable and maniacal Joker, who murdered the second boy to wear the mask of Batman's sidekick Robin.

The path Batman has chosen has not been an easy one over the years, as Wayne has devoted nearly all of his energies to his crusade, often at the expense of his personal, private life.

But as the Dark Knight, Wayne has found many allies in his fight against crime, including Gotham City Police Commissioner James Gordon (who utilizes a "Bat-signal" to summon Batman), Nightwing (formerly the original Robin), the Huntress and the ever-loyal Robin.

Perhaps the greatest challenge in Batman's career came when he was attacked by the steroid-enhanced villain known only as Bane. Wanting to defeat Batman emotionally as well as physically, Bane released all of the hero's greatest enemies from Arkham Asylum. It took nearly all of Batman's resources and energy to recapture them all, and when he finally completed the task, Bane attacked Batman at his weakest, and broke his back.

Wayne handed the mantle of the bat over to Jean-Paul Valley, a young zealot who had already fought crime under the identity of Azrael. Valley proved unworthy of the role by becoming a brutal vigilante, and when Wayne recovered, he took back his cape and cowl by force.

Since his return, Wayne has become even more obsessed with stopping criminals, even modifying his costume slightly to reflect his darker attitude. Also, since returning, the Caped Crusader has had to confront one of the newest evils of the late 20th century, a catastrophic virus released with the intent of killing everyone in Gotham. Wayne and his allies barely managed to contain the outbreak of the virus initially, only to have a second, more virulent strain resurface, and it was revealed that Batman's longtime enemy and would-be world dominator Ra's al Ghul was behind the outbreak in an attempt to "cleanse" the world.

Recently, Batman has once again joined the reformed Justice League, an arrangement that has proven to be tenuous at best, as his tolerance for other costumed superheroes, save Superman, is very low.

UPCOMING HIGHLIGHTS

Following the massive "virus" crossovers "Contagion" and "Legacy," the Bat-books have focused on smaller, self-contained stories. For example, stories that start in *Batman* will finish in *Batman*. Look for plenty of classic Bat-villains to show up in the coming months, including Two-Face (in a two-parter, natch), The Joker, Killer Croc and several others. Also, a couple of new villains will be introduced: Faceless early in the year, and a yet-unnamed bad guy later in the year.

Watch for major Bat-events that will tie in with this summer's "Batman and Robin" movie, including specials highlighting the adventures of Batgirl (in her pre-Oracle days), Mr. Freeze, Poison Ivy and Bane.

At last count, there are at least five regular Batman series coming out each month, with a few specials and mini-series during any given month. Batman has a knack for attracting the top talent in the industry, so chances are that whatever your taste, you'll be able to find a Bat-book that fits.

RECOMMENDED HIGHLIGHTS

• ***Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* #1-#4**—Frank Miller's futuristic Bat-tale is set 10 years after Batman's retirement. But when things get nasty in Gotham, Bruce Wayne must resume his Bat-duties and kick several criminals' asses.

• ***Batman* #404-#407**—Batman's definitive origin story. See Bruce Wayne's rite of passage as he makes mistakes all over the place. Watch Lt. Jim Gordon try to fight Gotham police's political machine and see how he ultimately confronts Batman for the first time.

• ***Batman: The Killing Joke***—The Joker's on a brutal campaign of horror as major characters like Batgirl and Comm. Gordon are tremendously affected. This book depicts the possible origin of the Clown Prince of Crime.

• ***Batman: Contagion***—This trade paperback reprints the best of the latest Bat-stories. Running through the entire Bat-family of titles, a lethal strain of Ebola runs rampant through Gotham, exterminating the population. Can Batman and his allies stop it in time?

SIMILAR TASTES

Want some other tastes of vigilantes on the edge? Then be sure to check out other books in DC's Bat-family, including *Nightwing, Azrael, Robin* and *Catwoman*. Also, for more urban crime-fighting, check out Marvel's *Daredevil* or early issues of Dark Horse's *X*. W

Matthew Brady, who wrote a bunch of other stuff in this issue, usually has something witty to say here, but in respect to Batman's grim, obsessive nature, prefers to just snarl.

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CARD MARKET

by Joyce M. Steel

Fleer/SkyBox Discover an *X-Men 2099: Oasis*!

1997's off to an X-tra special start, thanks to this month's offerings from Fleer/SkyBox. The Brothers Hildebrandt spice up Marvel Comics' X-Men 2099 saga in January with a 90-card set of originally painted art cards by the fellas, based on their Marvel graphic novel *Oasis*. In the *X-Men 2099: Oasis* premium, 24-pt. stock card set, Greg and Tim depict the future of the X-Men at a time when men and mutants should be living together in relative peace and harmony, but end up encountering a few nasty surprises along the way. A nine card Chromium chase set (1:12) and 500 Autographed cards chase the series (eight cards per pack, suggested retail $1.99).

File Under X

Elsewhere, Topps tempts "X-Files" fans in January with *The X-Files Showcase*, a 72-card photographic collection spotlighting six of the most popular episodes from the cult fave series' first season. Twelve cards will be dedicated to each featured episode, with never-before-seen images among the 300 or so photographs in the full set. Other bells and whistles include in-depth commentary on the card backs, two "Surprise" levels of chase cards, and the unveiling of the company's Super-Wide format for the basic set (nine cards per pack, suggested retail $1.99).

Voyager, Too!

Also, if you missed it last month, Trekkers'll wanna run right out to pick up some *Star Trek: Voyager Season Two* cards. The 100-carder promises a complete rundown of the second season from this popular Trek franchise, with subsets including Episode, Timeline Mural and Alpha Quadrant Visitor cards. Chase cards include three XenoBio and three 24th Century Technology Etched Foil cards (1:12), three Strange New Worlds Embossed Foil Cards (1:18) and three Holo-Emitter Cards (1:48) (eight cards per pack, suggested retail price $1.49).

WildStickers

WildStorm launches a new line of "Sticker Cards" for '97, and this month's 90-sticker collection includes the company's most popular characters like the Gen[13] gang and WildC.A.T.s, all drawn by hotshot artists Jim Lee, Whilce Portacio, J. Scott Campbell, Brett Booth and more (eight die-cut sticker cards per pack, suggested retail $1.50).

The Prisoner

Cornerstone Communications brings one of the coolest and most controversial television shows ever to trading cards for the first time in January! All the mystery and surrealism of "The Prisoner," which starred Patrick McGoohan as a captive in the strange Village, is showcased in the color-photographic 81-card set, which will be chased by an undetermined number of foil cards. This thing's hot—so hot, in fact, that it'll probably be a PolyGram flick later this year starring Mel Gibson (ten cards per pack, suggested retail $1.25-$1.75)!

Hari Kari

Blackout Comics takes its first dive into the trading card pool with a set based on their hit book *Hari Kari*. The limited edition nine card set features art by such notables as Charlie Adlard (*X-Files*), David Bluestein (*Spawn*), Joe Phillips (*Green Lantern*) and Ben Dunn (*Warrior Nun Areala*), and also boasts a photo card of the real-life Hari Kari. The artists will be randomly autographing their respective cards, and collectors can expect to get about one Autographed card in each boxed set (ten cards per boxed set, suggested retail $9.95).

Archie's Girls

Finally, Krome Productions returns to Riverdale High for a new all-Chromium, 50-card set starring the beautiful Betty and Veronica. Chase cards in the *Betty & Veronica Chromium Trading Cards* set include a parallel HoloChrome card in every pack, along with one of four oversized Chromium cards in every display box (five cards per pack, suggested retail $2.50). W

Joyce Steel once attended Riverdale High and even dated Archie until a psychotic and vengeful Betty cut Joyce's brake lines and punched her in the throat. Joyce got the hint.

"Look Scully...they're popping Orville Redenbacher's corpse!" Topps' *X-Files Showcase* set.

"Whee...I'm sticky!" WildStorm's Sticker card set.

"So then the first Rabbi says to the...waitaminnit. Where'd my clothes go?" Blackout Comics' *Hari Kari* set.

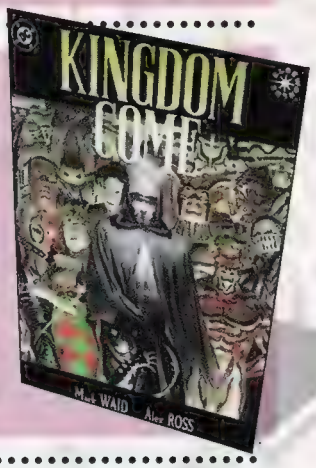
***Wizard*, by staying in touch with hundreds of retailers throughout the country, keeps a close eye on the country's hottest back issues. Here are December's hottest back issues.**

TOP 10 COMICS

1. WITCHBLADE #1

WRITERS: David Wohl, Brian Haberlin and Christina Z. ARTISTS: Michael Turner and D-Tron

Hot damn! That Sara Pezzini is somethin', isn't she? There she goes, running around with that wild Witchblade gauntlet thingie...and in spiked heels, no less! Didn't her mother ever tell her not to run around with sharp objects? She could lose an eye ('course, she'd just look tougher with an eye-patch). Well, despite what we might think about her upbringing, Sara seems to be doing okay. Just look at where she is now. She's a highly decorated police officer with her very first issue in our number one slot. This is in no small part due to writers Wohl, Haberlin and Z., and artists Turner and D-Tron, who have actually turned out a good comic about a "Bad Girl." Now if they can just get her to a dermatologist...



2. KINGDOM COME #1

WRITER: Mark Waid ARTIST: Alex Ross

Think about your parents' record collection for a moment. Do the Monkees, the Village People, the Beatles, Steve Miller and the Electric Light Orchestra sound familiar? Hey, we're not talking about the next line-up for the Jurassic Jam Tour. We're talking *Kingdom Come* (not to be confused with the cheesy '80s Zeppelin clone band with the same name). All these musical geniuses make their appearance in *Kingdom Come*, thanks to the artistic genius of Alex Ross and the writing genius of Mark Waid. They told us the dark story about the heroes of yesterday trying to bring the dangerous and violently out-of-control "heroes" of the future under control. However, we don't know which is scarier, the gritty plotline or Alex Ross' taste in music. You decide.

3. PREACHER #1

WRITER: Garth Ennis
ARTIST: Steve Dillon

How many more months must we continue to write about *Preacher* #1? Sure, it's bloody and violent. And yes, there is a cool punk vampire and lots of swear words. And Garth Ennis writes one heck of a story...waitaminnit! Maybe if we didn't tell you how boss this comic is, maybe you wouldn't buy it and we could stop trying to think of new and "witty" things to say about it. And if we say something *negative* about it, maybe you would definitely avoid buying it. Hmm...what can we say that's rank about this comic? Okay, we got it. Did we mention there's not enough copies out there for everyone? No? Well, there.

NUMBER THREE

NUMBER FOUR

4. WITCHBLADE #2

WRITERS: D. Wohl, B. Haberlin and Christina Z.
ARTISTS: Michael Turner and D-Tron

Why is it that all the Witchblade babes are like these really tough chicks? The current Witchblade is a cop. Then there's the pirate Witchblade. And how about that brawling medieval Witchblade? Why wasn't there ever a cashier Witchblade or a secretary Witchblade? I suppose the stories might be a little less exciting, but cashiers and secretaries can lead just as productive lives as cops, pirates and medieval...um...whatevers. Sure, cops and pirates can be scary, but try and imagine a dental hygienist with the Witchblade. She could turn a routine teeth cleaning into your worst nightmare. Now *that's* scary.

NUMBER FIVE

5. JLA #1

WRITER: Grant Morrison
ARTISTS: Howard Porter and John Dell

Hoo hah! The original JLA line-up is back! It's about friggin' time. Not to say we hate characters like Ice Maiden and Nuklon, but hey, we hate characters like Ice Maiden and Nuklon. Can Ice Maiden shoot solar beams out of her eyes? Can she talk to the fishes? Does she even have a power ring, utility belt or Lasso of Truth? Ha! The answer to all these questions is no. The only thing she's good for is dispensing ice at a cocktail party. Long live the new JLA!

6. X-FILES #1

WRITER: Stefan Petrucha
ARTIST: Charles Adlard

Have you ever been awakened at 2:46 a.m., abducted by aliens, strapped down to some laboratory table in their spacecraft and then been "probed" like you've never have been "probed" before? And then when you awaken, your memory is fuzzy, your butt is killing you and no one will believe you except for some dumbass FBI guys who have never solved a case in their lives? Well, if the answer is no, then read about these types of probings, incompetent FBI agents and other strange phenomena in Petrucha's and Adlard's conspiracy-laden and alien-filled title, *The X-Files*. If your answer's yes, quit reading this magazine, take your Prozac and please get a life.

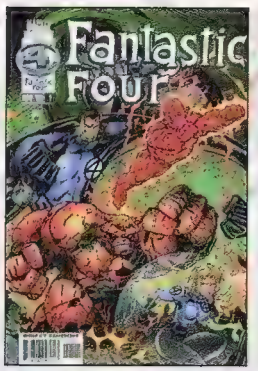
NUMBER SIX

NUMBER SEVEN

7. DV8 #1

WRITER: Warren Ellis
ARTISTS: Humberto Ramos and Sal Regla

First there was Gen[13], and now Jim Lee presents DV8. What's the difference between the two teams, you may ask? Well, let's put it to you this way. DV8 members are nuttier than fruitcakes and more psychotic than a Wrigley Field full of Jeffrey Dahmers. While the Gen[13] kids spend their spare time playing video games and meeting up with the likes of Archie and Jughead, DV8 members are disemboweling prospective one-night-stands and fending off their security man, Sideways Bob, and his disembodied girlfriend Lucille. Heck, sounds more like reality than the fun world of comics to us.



NUMBER EIGHT

8. FANTASTIC FOUR #1

WRITERS: Jim Lee and Brandon Choi
ARTISTS: Jim Lee and Scott Williams

Boy, if you had told us fanboys back in the mid-'80s that Marvel would one day cancel and relaunch their core books, we woulda looked at you sideways, rolled up a copy of *Amazing Heroes*, swatted you on the nose and told you to "Go 'way." But they did it. The response? People are curious and are picking up *FF*, *Iron Man*, *Avengers* and *Captain America* just to see what's going on. While there's a lot of mixed reviews coming back, the *FF* has proven to be the most popular one of the bunch. Fans seem to be digging Jim Lee's take on Reed, Sue, Ben and Johnny and the various *FF* supporting cast. Us? We're just looking forward to his take on Paste-Pot Pete and H.E.R.B.I.E. the Robot.

9. ONSLAUGHT: X-MEN #1

WRITERS: Scott Lobdell and Mark Waid
ARTISTS: Adam Kubert and Dan Green

There's a big catch-22 going on here. First, you have Wolverine running around with ripped-up, dirty, stinky clothes that haven't been washed in who knows how long. But since current continuity has Wolverine's nose banished to the Negative Zone, there's no way he realizes how ripe he is. And who's gonna tell that murderous li'l psychopath that his body is a good place for a Stick-Up. The good thing is that none of that matters as to why this book is hot, which is due simply to the popularity of Marvel's Onslaught character and crossover series.

NUMBER NINE

10. SUPERGIRL #1

WRITER: Peter David
ARTISTS: Gary Frank and Cam Smith

Remember little Kara Zor-El, a.k.a. Linda Danvers, a.k.a. Supergirl, cousin of Superman? Well, forget about her, 'cuz she died during *Crisis*, and her history was erased with *Zero Hour*. But her successor is here with a slightly less convoluted background. From the same team that brought you the *Incredible Hulk* comes *Supergirl*, a powerful shape-shifting alien who has taken over the life of deceased troubled teen, Linda Danvers, whom she also happens to be mentally bonded with—whew! See? Nothing convoluted here.

NUMBER TEN

THE NEXT TEN

THE NEXT 10 HOT BOOKS AND THE COMPANIES THAT MAKE THEM

11. HITMAN #1 DC
12. STAR TREK/X-MEN #1 MARVEL
13. PREACHER #2 DC
14. WOLVERINE #100 MARVEL
15. SPAWN #9 IMAGE
16. GREEN LANTERN #81 DC
17. DAWN #1 SIRIUS
18. FANTASTIC FOUR #2 MARVEL
19. ASTRO CITY #1 (VOL.2) HOMAGE
20. IRON MAN #1 MARVEL

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Photo: Paul Schiraldi

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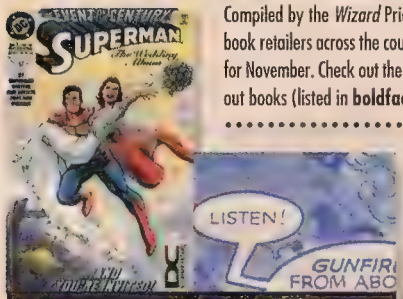
WIZARD TOP 100

The highest-ordered comic books for the month of NOVEMBER.

Compiled by the *Wizard* Price Guide staff, and working off the data supplied by comic book retailers across the country, the following is a listing of the highest-ordered comics for November. Check out the column on the right for an explanation of this month's standout books (listed in **boldface type**). **(CE=Collector's Edition)**



1. Superman: The Wedding Album CE (DC)

2. **Uncanny X-Men #340 (Marvel)**
3. **X-Men #60 (Marvel)**
4. Wolverine #109 (Marvel)
5. **Spawn #56 (Image)**
6. **Fantastic Four #3 (Marvel)**
7. **Iron Man #3 (Marvel)**
8. **Spawn "The Impaler" #2 (Image)**
9. **Curse of the Spawn #3 (Image)**
10. Generation X #23 (Marvel)
11. **Avengers #3 (Marvel)**
12. **Captain America #3 (Marvel)**
13. DC/Marvel: All Access #2 (DC)
14. X-Man #23 (Marvel)
15. X-Force #62 (Marvel)
16. DC/Marvel: All Access #3 (DC)
17. **Gen[13] #15 (Image)**
18. **X-Factor #130 (Marvel)**
19. Cable #39 (Marvel)
20. **Deadpool #1 (Marvel)**
21. **Gen[13] Bootleg #1 (Image)**
22. Magneto #3 (Marvel)
23. **Spider-Man/Gen[13] (Marvel)**
24. **JLA #1 (DC)**
25. X-Men: The Rise of Apocalypse #4 (Marvel)
26. X-Man '96 (Marvel)
27. Imperial Guard #1 (Marvel)
28. Excalibur #105 (Marvel)
29. Adventures of Superman #541 (DC)
30. Action Comics #728 (DC)
31. Superman: The Man of Steel #63 (DC)
32. X.S.E. #3 (Marvel)
33. Amazing Spider-Man #419 (Marvel)
34. Sabretooth and Mystique #2 (Marvel)
35. Incredible Hulk #449 (Marvel)
36. **The Darkness #1 (Image)**
37. Domino #1 (Marvel)
38. Peter Parker: Spider-Man #76 (Marvel)
39. Witchblade #11 (Image)
40. Team X/Team 7 (Marvel)
41. Spectacular Spider-Man #242 (Marvel)
42. Maverick (Marvel)
43. **Silver Surfer/Superman (Marvel)**
44. Sensational Spider-Man #12 (Marvel)
45. Batman #538 (DC)
46. The X-Files #24 (Topps)
47. **DV8 #3 (Image)**
48. Elektra #3 (Marvel)
49. Superman #119 (DC)
50. Spider-Man: Hobgoblin Lives! #1 (Marvel)
51. Supergirl #5 (DC)
52. Detective Comics #705 (DC)
53. Adventures of Superman #542 (DC)
54. Action Comics #729 (DC)
55. Superman: The Man of Steel #64 (DC)
56. Batman: The Long Halloween #2 (DC)
57. What If? #93 (Marvel)
58. **S. Wars: T. of the Jedi—G.A.S. #2 (D.H.)**
59. **Superman: The Wedding Album (DC)**
60. Nightwing #4 (DC)
61. Star Trek Unlimited #2 (Marvel)
62. Venom: Tooth and Claw #2 (Marvel)
63. The X-Files: Season One #5 (Topps)
64. **Shi #12 (Crusade)**
65. Green Lantern #82 (DC)
66. Batman: Shadow of the Bat #58 (DC)
67. Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight #90 (DC)
68. Thrillkiller #1 (DC)
69. Preacher #21 (DC)
70. Batman: Blackgate #1 (DC)
71. Robin #37 (DC)
72. **Journey into Mystery #505 (Marvel)**
73. The Flash #121 (DC)
74. Superman/W. Woman: W. Gods Destroy #2 (DC)
75. Wolverine Encyclopedia Vol. 1 (Marvel)
76. The Flash Plus #1 (DC)
77. **S. Wars: X-Wing R. S.—W. Princess #1 (D.H.)**
78. Catwoman #41 (DC)
79. Purgatori: The Vampires Myth #3 (Chaos!)
80. Abominations #2 (Marvel)
81. **Superman's Metropolis (DC)**
82. Batman Chronicles #7 (DC)
83. Wonder Woman #117 (DC)
84. Untold Tales of Spider-Man #17 (Marvel)
85. Darkchylde #5 (Maximum Press)
86. The Dreaming #8 (DC)
87. Astro City (Vol. 2) #4 (Image)
88. Cyberforce #29 (Image)
89. World's Finest: Superboy & Robin #2 (DC)
90. **Superman: The W. Album CE [Next Day] (DC)**
91. WetWorks #23 (Image)
92. Azrael #25 (DC)
93. Teen Titans #4 (DC)
94. Daredevil #360 (Marvel)
95. Silver Surfer #124 (Marvel)
96. **Shadowman #1 (Acclaim)**
97. The Maxx #28 (Image)
98. Prof. Xavier and the X-Men #15 (Marvel)
99. **Superboy #35 (DC)**
100. Wonder Woman Plus #1 (DC)

AT THE TOP:

Aside from the area of amounts requested, *Superman: The Wedding Album* wreaked havoc with retailers' order sheets, since it was solicited *after* the regular October Superbooks were originally solicited. (This fact also pushed the October release into the November chart, since the order numbers came in late.) The book was, of course, successful (thanks in part to mass-media attention), although the Standard Edition came in at a low #59, probably because retailers knew the spiffier, glossy-covered Collector's Edition would be scooped up faster. (There was a third "edition," of sorts—shipped by next day air—but it wasn't too well-ordered.) Iceman's apparently more popular than Storm, as implied by the orders for *Uncanny X-Men* #340 (a spotlight on Bobby) beating those for *X-Men* #60 (a Storm story). The three Spawn series and four "Heroes Reborn" titles hit around their usual high marks, with *"The Impaler"* staying in the top 10, as expected, and *Avengers* jumping over *Cap. X-Factor*'s major Creed assassination story didn't have a major effect on the issue's sales, but Marvel's strong push for its new Deadpool series worked out. *Gen[13]* was all over the chart, thanks to three solidly ranking books (including the Spidey crossover, whose $4.95 ticket might've prevented phenomenal sales).

IN THE MIDDLE:

Speaking of phenomenal, DC's biggest ongoing-title seller was *JLA*, thanks to all of its fan-favorite superstars. It conquered all the other regular DC titles, and even a few mutant books—will it continue this accomplishment in the months to come? Garth Ennis and Marc Silvestri's long-awaited *The Darkness* scored up a fair amount of orders. Thanks to their team-up, the Silver Surfer enjoyed Superman's regular numbers. *DV8*'s fun stories and Gen[13] connection can't stop its steadily-sinking-sales problem; maybe a certain team-up is in order for *that* title.

IN THE SECOND HALF:

Three significant drops this month: *Shi* isn't hitting its normal #20s and #30s (possibly due to its irregular shipping schedule); *Journey into Mystery*, Marvel's *Thor* replacement, went down 26 notches (its lack of standard superheroes could be a reason); and *Superboy*—once a #30s book—is close to falling off the chart (even writer Ron Marz may not be enough to save it). Dark Horse's *Star Wars* offerings are still doing all right, *Metropolis* fared well for a $5.95 Elseworlds book, and Acclaim has charted again with its brand-new *Shadowman*.

ATTENTION COMIC BOOK RETAILERS:

If you're a retailer who would like to participate in our compiling of the *Wizard* Top 100 (and be a candidate for special prizes), please write to us at the address below.

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Congers, NY 10920-2064
or e-mail us at: **WizardTGTC@aol.com**

MARKET WATCH

COMIC MARKET NEWS AND SUCH · by Jon Warren and Walter Irwin

JLA SCORES BIG!

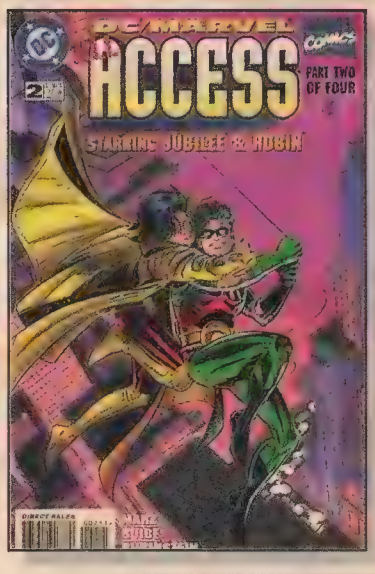
They're back—and in a big way! The *real* superheroes, the big guys, the A-list, the Super Friends—Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, Flash, Green Lantern, Aquaman and the Martian Manhunter (okay, so maybe the Manhunter wasn't in the Super Friends; sue us)—are all back on one kick-butt team, in DC's new ongoing title *JLA*. This concept was a no-brainer back in 1959, and it's a no-brainer now. Since its debut in early November, the title's selling great and reorders on the first issue (along with a second printing) make it a bonafide hit. As long as DC resists the temptation to start packing in the second-stringers ("Say, the sales on Brother Power's book might pick up if we put him in the JLA…"), it should remain hot.

Incidentally, *JLA* #1, along with the series' prelude, the *Justice League: A Midsummer's Nightmare* mini-series, are still available, but for above their cover prices. If you've procrastinated about picking them up, get them now while you still can!

ACCESSING *ALL ACCESS*

Not much can top the original *DC versus Marvel* mini-series, but its sequel mini-series *DC/Marvel: All Access* is trying its darnedest. Said Jim Raughle of Marie's Books & Things in Fredericksburg, Va., "We know it's only a team-up, but the first three issues went flying off the shelves. Keep 'em coming!"

It would definitely be in Marvel and DC's best interest to "keep 'em coming" as an annual event. But there is a lingering question about the crossover that fans wanna know: *When* will we see more Amalgam? Sooner than you might think, as rumors swirl that a second wave of Amalgam titles will ship next spring. Rumored to be returning are the most popular of the first wave—namely Dark Claw, Super-Soldier, JLX and Spider-Boy.



Above: Will *All Access* lead into another Amalgam? Below: *JLA* is a no-brainer success for DC

Don't pick up on *Darkchylde* too late

DON'T UNDERESTIMATE DARKCHYLDE

"It's the best new book I've read in a while," said Bobby Murphy, a fan based in New York, N.Y., about *Darkchylde*. "I'm surprised it's taken people this long to pick up on it." Writer/artist Randy Queen described his hot property—which was recently picked up by Image Comics after leaving Maximum Press—as a cross between *Gen13*, *The Tick* and *Swamp Thing*. This horror-oriented tale is about an abused girl who is in actuality a sorceress who acts a portal for demons from another dimension. Her job is to stop these demons, under the control of another sorcerer, from taking over the world.

And she's doing something else in the process: entertaining both readers and retailers. There's a lot of buzz swirling about *Darkchylde*, and if you plan on picking up back issues, you'd be a fool to not do it now.

KIDS ARE PEOPLE TOO!

Wouldja believe that Archie comics are making a strong comeback? You'd better believe it! Sales are up across the line. Why? Well, a hit prime-time TV show featuring a major Archie character, "Sabrina the Teenage Witch," didn't hurt, and neither did a guest appearance in *Gen13* #13A, but truth be known, kids have discovered the joys of Archie, Betty, Jughead and the gang once again. Retailer Warren Hahn of Warren's Bookstore in Lecanto, Fla., said, "The little tykes are spending their allowances on Archie titles, and they come in every week! Tell your dealers—don't forget the little people!" Do yourself a favor…buy some Archies for a kid in your life, but read 'em yourself first! You'll find out they're just as funny and entertaining now as they ever were. You just might end up adding a few titles to your own collection!

Jon "Moose" Warren and Walter "Dilton" Irwin were last seen fighting over a Cheryl Blossom issue.

Wizard's Top 10 Hottest Writers

1 **Garth Ennis** *Preacher, Hitman*

2 **Mark Waid** *Flash, X-O Manowar*

Al Ortega
3 **Peter David** *Hulk, Aquaman*

Al Ortega
4 **Neil Gaiman** *Sandman*

J. Schuyler
5 **Scott Lobdell** *Generation X, Uncanny X-Men*

6 **Kurt Busiek** *Astro City, Untold Tales of Spidey*

Al Ortega
7 **Ron Marz** *Green Lantern, Superboy*

J. Schuyler
8 **Karl Kesel** *Daredevil*

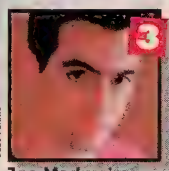
Al Ortega
9 **James Robinson** *Starman, Leave it to Chance*

10 **Chuck Dixon** *Robin, Green Arrow*

Wizard's Top 10 Hottest Artists

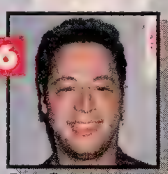
Al Ortega
1 **Todd McFarlane** *Spawn*

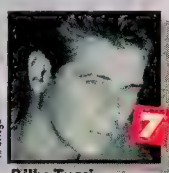
Al Ortega
2 **Jim Lee** *Fantastic Four*


Gabe Palacio
3 **Joe Madureira** *Uncanny X-Men*

4 **J. Scott Campbell** *Gen13*

Al Ortega
5 **Alex Ross** *Kingdom Come*


6 **Joe Quesada** *Ash*

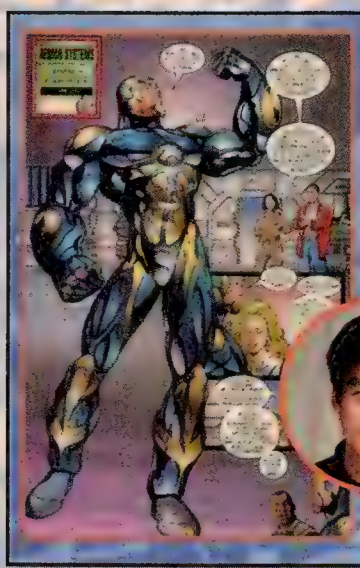

Al Ortega
7 **Billy Tucci** *Shi*

8 **Michael Turner** *Witchblade*

9 **Humberto Ramos** *Impulse, DV8*

10 **Mike Wieringo** *Sensational Spider-Man*

***Wizard*'s Top Ten Hottest Writers and Artists lists are derived from a nationwide retailer survey.**



Wizard's Up & Coming Creator

SEAN CHEN

An Acclaim Comics veteran of four years, Sean Chen is now the penciler of the new *X-O Manowar*, rendering the scripts of Mark Waid and Brian Augustyn. Since his rookie days on *Harbinger*, Chen has honed his skills by using a more dynamic, splashier style for his action sequences than before. His storytelling is easy to follow and his attention to facial emotion is excellent (like Rand Banion's wide-eyed heroic smiles and Donovan's cynical smirks), as is his detailed, realistic technology.

X-O Manowar editor Lynaire Thompson says of Chen, "I like his clean style, his clean storytelling and his consistency from panel to panel, but especially, the way his details make everything seem real." *Marc Wilkofsky*

survey: issue 66

QUESTIONS, COMMENTS & CONCERNS

We want to know what you like about this li'l mag of ours. Tell us what you thought about this particular issue of *WIZARD*, what you liked best, and what sucked sour frog ass. (Use extra paper if you're one of them long-winded types.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

PRICE CHANGES

Are books selling in your area for a lot more or a lot less than *WIZARD* is listing them at?
If they are, we wanna know. List any major discrepancies you feel exist in the *WIZARD* price guide.
(Use extra paper if necessary.)

Title	Issue #	What it sells for in your area

TOP TEN HOTTEST COMICS

What do you see as the hottest comics among the circle of friends you hang out with? List them below, with the hottest book at the number one slot.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

TOP TEN HOTTEST ARTISTS

Who is your favorite comic book artist? Actually, we wanna know who your top 10 favorite artists are. List your favorite artist in the number one slot, followed by your second favorite artist, etc.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

TOP TEN HOTTEST WRITERS

Hang in there; we're almost done. What we need now is the list of your 10 favorite comic book writers.
You know the drill: your favorite in pole position, with your second favorite at number two, yadda, yadda, yadda.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

let your voice be heard

WE WANT TO KNOW WHAT YOU THINK

We need your help. Y'see, the only way to keep improving the WIZARD price guide is to keep in touch with the thousands of comic book fans that make this industry what it is. So, we need you to take a couple of minutes and fill out the survey on the left and mail this page to us. And heck, by helping us make a better mag, you'll *get* a better mag! (See? It all works out in the end.) Oh, and feel free to photocopy this page if you don't feel like destroying this issue.

WHO ARE YOU?

_____
Name (please print)

_____
Address

_____
City State

_____
Zip Age

_____
e-mail address (if you got one)

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BULL PEN

C.B.I.Q.

Games, puzzles and stuff that'll tickle your tummy with the taste of nuts and honey

comic book intelligence quotient

Former Mort of the Month Merry, Girl of a Thousand Gimmicks, welcomes you to the Miscellaneous *Wizard* Fun Section

This month, we'll be grading your comic trivia knowledge against recent inane Marvel revivals. The more baffling the comeback, the higher your score.

Score	Rank
0-4	**Bug:** ...who? In a move that's sure to boost Marvel's stock, this ex-Micronaut is getting his own one-shot or something.
5-14	**Ka-Zar:** Wheee! He's got a big tiger and an upcoming series!
15-19	**Elektra:** The dead grim 'n' gritty super-assassin has been resurrected as...as a dancer? Bad, Marvel, bad!
20	**Howard the Duck:** "Hmm...let's make our core characters somebody else's problem and bring back the master of Quack-Fu!" Somebody get us a bat.

1. How did the X-Man known as Thunderbird die?
A) He jumped onto Count Nefaria's escaping plane in an attempt to stop him and it crashed into a mountain, killing the hero. BOOM!
B) The mutant-island Krakoa consumed his life-essence.
C) He was crushed by a falling Sentinel. SPLAT!
D) He disconnected the Blob's enema hose too fast, and ended up stuccoed to a wall. GURGLE-SPLAT!

2. Holy spandex! Which of the following groups did Batman's first sidekick, Nightwing, *not* belong to?
A) Teen Titans
B) Justice League Task Force
C) Team Titans
D) the Flying Graysons (who, as it turned out, couldn't really fly)

3. Which one of Peter Parker's friends died in *Untold Tales of Spider-Man* #13?
A) Sally Avril
B) Gwen Stacy
C) Deb Whitman
D) Ms. Lion (and we hope it hurt)

4. Which of the following DC sorcerers is from Atlantis?
A) Amethyst
B) Arion
C) Sargon
D) Felix Faust

5. Which Gen[13] teen appeared in Crusade's *Atomik Angels* premiere issue?
A) Fairchild
B) Rainmaker
C) Freefall
D) Queelocke

7. Nightcrawler has a childhood sweetheart. What's her name and what's unique about her?
A) Amanda Sefton, and she's a sorceress
B) Amanda St. Germain, and she's the cyberspace hero Cybernaut
C) Amanda Szarsda, and she's a famous gypsy queen from Nightcrawler's homeland
D) Amanda Hugginkiss, and Nightcrawler never failed to get a laugh when he asked for her: "Hey...anybody see Amanda Hugginkiss? I need Amanda Hugginkiss!"

8. What was the name of the dog that kept company with the World War II soldiers known as the Losers?
A) Ace
B) Pooch
C) Rex
D) Anna-Nicole Smith

9. How's New Warrior Namorita related to the pre-"Heroes Reborn" Namor?
A) She's a genetically engineered human sent to keep tabs on the dangerously volatile Sub-Mariner.
B) She's his second cousin.
C) She is the clone of his sister.
D) She's his daughter, but when he disappeared during "Onslaught," she blinked out of reality.

10. In the pages of *Dawn*, what did Jaynis try to take away from Darrian the barbarian that caused the two to get into a brawl?
A) the sword that Darrian inherited from his father
B) Lucifer's halo
C) an apple given to Darrian by Dawn
D) A copy of *Cry for Dawn* #1. Geez, that thing's worth like $250!!

11. The newest X-O Manowar, Rand Banion, originally belonged to...
A) the Green Berets.
B) the Harbinger Active Resistance Division Corps (H.A.R.D. Corps).
C) the Special Forces.
D) Legion of Armored Metahuman Elite (L.A.M.E.).

12. Each scar on the Bat-foe Mr. Zsasz represents...
A) a person Mr. Z has killed.
B) every time Batman caught him and tossed him in jail (and now he blames Bats for his self-inflicted ugliness).
C) the sins he committed that he must atone for (and which God will erase his scars for when he's repented).
D) how many times Zsasz has deflowered Cocoa, the sock puppet with the heart of gold.

13. When Wonder Man was trying to promote his acting career, on what '80s talk show did he and several other Avengers appear?
A) "Late Night with David Letterman"
B) "The Arsenio Hall Show"
C) "The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson"
D) "Thicke of the Night"

14. Robo-tramp Ladytron belongs to this team:
A) the Micronauts.
B) FemForce.
C) WildC.A.T.s.
D) Who knows, but that Tron guy from that old Disney flick wants to know so bad he's vibrating (he hasn't gotten any since nailin' Ms. Pac-Man in '84).

15. When Wally West (the Flash) recently zoomed back to the 20th century, what did he discover his girlfriend Linda had been turned into?
A) a cyborg
B) an ice statue
C) a stone statue
D) one of them, you know...liberals

16. Which team recently battled Mojo alongside of X-Force?
A) Gen[13]
B) WildC.A.T.s
C) Youngblood
D) WetWorks

17. How did Spidey get rid of those four extra arms he grew while trying to lose his Spider-powers?
A) He took the anti-reptile serum that cured Curt Conners of his Lizard persona and *voilà*, the arms shrank away.
B) Reed Richards cured him with a radiation-absorption machine.
C) An enzyme in the blood of Morbius the living vampire reversed the effects of the experiment.
D) Against the main school bus rule, he stuck his extra arms out the window and CHOK!, off they came.

18. What rat-bastard alien race was responsible for the creation of the Inhumans while experimenting on humans?
A) the Skrulls
B) the Kree
C) the Shi'ar
D) the French (the first *Wizard* crack on the French for the year of our Lord nineteen-hundred and ninety-seven)

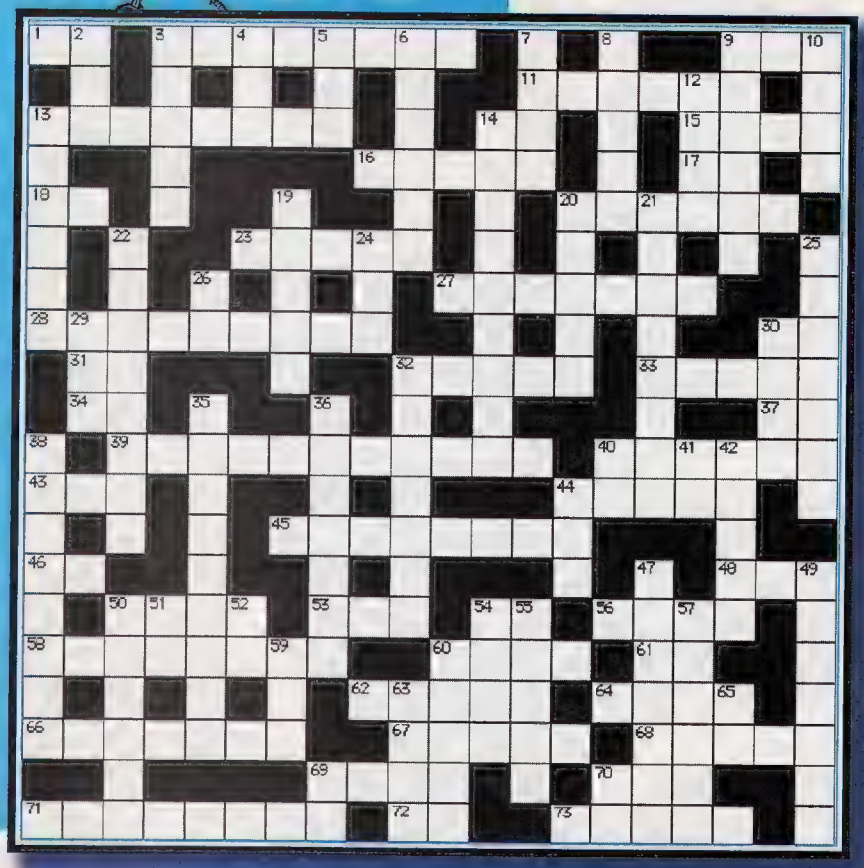
19. How did Superman lose his powers during the "Final Night" plotline?
A) When the sun was blotted out, he was unable to use the yellow sun radiation to recharge his superpowers.
B) Parallax needed to drain the powers from Earth's heroes to add to his own in his attempt to restart the sun.
C) Blaming himself for not being able to save the sun, Supes' subconscious "turned off" his superpowers.
D) Now that Supes is married, he's just lost "it," just like Bruce Springsteen, Sting and Billy Joel.

20. What happened to Cavewoman's hometown of Marshville, Ore.?
A) It was destroyed when her grandfather's experiment sent her back in time to the Cretaceous period.
B) It was sent 70 million years into the past.
C) It was teleported to a plant-covered planet.
D) It was one of the stops of the "Heroes Reborn" tour that was burned to the ground by fans chanting, "Give us back the 'A,' don't make us get surly, and what were you thinking, making Bucky a girlie?"

WIZARD CROSSWORD

you know, across, down, that sort of stuff

TOO TOUGH?
Quit yer whinin'.
The answers are on page 190.



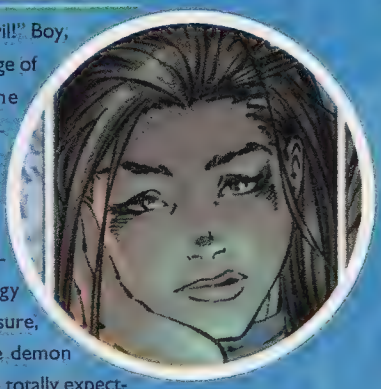
1. Max Mercury's young housemate; initials
3. Mr. Miracle's teacher, Granny _____
9. ex-JLAer Crimson ___
11. DC's main computer operator
13. "Great Krypton!"
14. "City __ the Edge of Forever"
15. Namor's large Atlantean foe
16. Lobo fragged him five X-Mases ago
17. New Warriors' Nova; init.
18. Gen[13] mentor's ex-organization
20. Event Comics' 22 _____
23. Daredevil's buddy
27. doctor who died in *Zero Hour*
28. Hulk, Silver Surfer and Namor
30. Gen[13]'s homebase, __ Jolla
31. *Supergirl* artist; init.
32. chemical-laden Metal Men foe
33. London Night Studios' violent heroine
34. Ganthet's home
37. new *Sovereign Seven* artist; init.
39. Areala's gypsy foe
40. Superboy's home
43. original "Star Trek" network
44. Thing is made of these
45. X-villainess; Polaris' sister
46. *Wolverine* writer; init.
48. early Byrne indy book; ___ *2000*
50. Marc Spector: _____ Knight
53. Jamie Sommers has a bionic this
54. *Tempest* and *Invisibles* penciler; init.
56. Brent Spiner's "Next Gen" android
58. Lucas film back in January
60. Brotherhood of Evil Mutants lackey
61. Stark Enterprises was based here; init.
62. Simpsons town's Duff produces these
64. hulking Creed hybrid
66. Big Barda's weapon
67. artist of 1 across and *DV8*
68. short-lived team Great _____ Avengers
69. babe-filled manga title *Dirty* _____
70. his death inspired Spidey
71. Blue Beetle's original comic company
72. Major Superman artist; init.
73. Danny Ketch; _____ Rider

2. Kwik-E-Mart manager
3. Arrow or Hornet
4. Aquaman's villainous half-brother
5. "Superman II" villain
6. disbelieving *X-Files* agent
7. Marz and Garney
8. Black or Speed
9. Malibu hero with fully die-cut comic
10. young captive of Onslaught
12. JLA manipulator; Maxwell _____
13. Jasper Stiwell's agency
14. Metamorpho, Halo and Geo-Force
19. killed Robin II
20. 62 across' comic company
21. Legion of Super-Heroes language
22. Batman's son in *Kingdom Come*
24. Sandman wears a ___ mask
25. Dreadstar scribe, pre-David
26. "A Death __ the Family"
29. the Living Planet
30. young, time-displaced Legion friend
32. Cable's grandfather
35. Acclaim's armored hero
36. Starman and his brother, recently
38. Freedom Fighters leader
40. a Green Goblin; init.
41. played Greatest American Hero; init.
42. youngest First Family member
44. "Steempy! You eediot!!"
47. *Enterprise*'s shuttle
49. Superman wears 'em; WW used to
50. Marvel crime syndicate
51. One of the Stonecutters' leaders; init.
52. drew the drugged-up Speedy; init.
54. Aquaman's recently murdered mother
55. Carrie Kelley's predecessor
57. Risk, Prysm and the Atom
59. Sonja, Star or Tornado
60. Death's face seems to have these
63. Marc Silvestri's writer brother
65. *Kingdom Come* and *Sandman* letterer; init.
69. Alan Davis' inking partner; init.
70. Marvel head honcho; init.

TOP 10 HEROES & VILLAINS OF THE MONTH

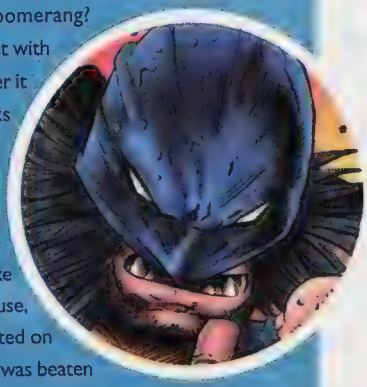
This list doesn't track the number of copies which a specific character sells each month. It doesn't pay attention to any kind of sales meter. This list is a roster of the 10 comic book characters with the strongest fan following—nothing more, nothing less.

1) WITCHBLADE



"Like, I totally combat evil!" Boy, if I were ever on the verge of being eaten by some demonic beastie or seconds away from being smitten from existence by a cosmic diety, I'd sure want this Witchblade bundle of energy guarding my tail. "Like, sure, I would go and slay the demon or whatever, but I'm like totally expecting a call." Now, if we had that spiffy-keen Witchblade gauntlet, we'd never stop using it. We'd create giant howler monkeys with a voracious sexual appetite, sink France and finally do something about Don King. And then we'd give it back. Honest.

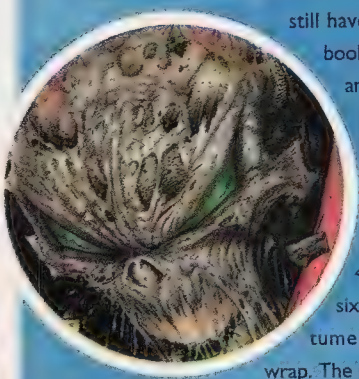
2) WOLVERINE



There are stupid costume designs, and there are *stupid* costume designs. Captain Boomerang? He's got a poofy blue jacket with li'l white boomerangs all over it and a teeny hat. He looks more like a breakfast cereal spokesperson than a supervillain. Mr. Terrific? Once you get past a name that makes this guy sound like the towel boy in a bathhouse, there's the "Fair Play" printed on his belly. It's no wonder he was beaten to death. Then there's Wolverine's new…outfit (we're hesitant to call it a costume). An old X-Men uniform with the sleeves ripped off, bare feet, biker gloves and a bandanna facemask? This thing is to costume designs what jock itch in church is to your general level of comfort.

3) SPAWN

One word: moisturize. Geez, as bad as Wolverine's mask is, we'd pay 10 bucks to have it covering Spawny-guy's mug. But in a way, Al's kisser here is pretty cool. It proves that superheroes don't have to be beautiful men or women in skintight spandex with perfect bodies, immovable hair and certain body parts hanging out of their costumes. They can look like a coconut with glowing eyes and still have a top-selling comic book, a successful toy line, an animated series and a movie deal. But all that aside, just imagine how much more these products could sell if Spawn was a 44DD with long hair, six-inch heels and a costume made from bubble-wrap. The mind boggles…



4) FAIRCHILD

Redheads are usually…hmm, how to say this without alienating our redheaded readers…butt-ugly? No, that'll piss off everybody with red or "strawberry-blonde" hair. Let's just say that carrot-tops aren't always easy on the eyes (Boy, this sure sounds hypocritical after that Spawn write-up, eh?). But not in comics. Oh, no. Hot redheads are *everywhere* (remember, kids, comics am fantasy). Mary Jane Watson, Jean Grey, Black Widow, Scarlet Witch, Lana Lang, Kinetix, Maxima, Oracle, Medusa, Poison Ivy, Rachel Summers…heck, the list is huge even without touching upon Caitlin Fairchild here. Our point? We have none. Just an observation that most comic creators are male and, well, that explains a lot.

5) BATMAN

Wider...wider...yup, there is a li'l George Clooney inside this Bat-suit. Sheesh, not to sound too prematurely negative and harp on a topic forever (no, never in *Wizard*), but how much is the "Batman and Robin" movie going to suck? As bad as "Batman Forever" was, try adding three more players to the plot and see what kind of unfollowable abomination you're left with! Dear God, we never thought we'd say this, but...please make these stupid movies more like the first one!!

6) SPIDER-MAN

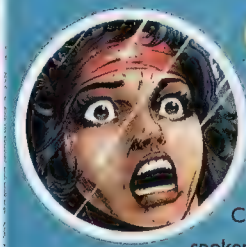
Think all those Spidey editors and writers who came up with the whole "Return of the Spider-Clone" mess now sit around together late at night, drink beers, weep openly and moan, "We...we just tried to do good..."? Well, that's what you get for being stupid. Anyhoo, now that Peter Parker is Spidey again, and they've (apparently) done away with all the clone garbage, written out the Spider-baby and moved Petey back to a school setting, it looks like the "real" Spidey is finally back.

7) MAGNETO

What the hell is Gran'ma Ben doing in the X-Men? Oooh...maybe it's like that whole multicompany crossover thing that they recently did in *Gen*[13] #13. Y'know, the one with that weird "Wizard slays the beast" thing that just, well, just didn't make too much sense. Which is okay, because the whole de-aging of Magneto/Joseph/amnesia stunt they just pulled doesn't make any sense, either. So, if nothing else, we have achieved a symmetry in bafflement.

8) X-MAN

We're in a new age of heroes. Instead of costumes that symbolize what a hero is about ("That guy in red, white and blue with a star on his chest? Captain America. And that red and blue guy with the web-patterns on his tights and the spider on his chest? Spider-Man."), what's "in" are militaristic uniforms as costumes, face paint and hair dye (Does X-Man go to the same hairstylist as Rogue?). We prefer heroes we can pick out of a crowd, not those who completely blend into one.



9) ELEKTRA

Wonder if this is how Frank Miller looked when he was told that Elektra is alive, is a dancer and now has a heart of gold (Just like a Stephen J. Cannell premise, eh?). Bet the soft-spoken, non-inflammatory Mr. Miller was real fun to be around when he found that out. And us? We dig Elektra. She's one of the few characters we don't mind being resurrected (though we gotta admit this present incarnation's pretty weak), and fans feel the same way about her.

10) BISHOP

If our hair looked like that, we'd be grimacing too. Geez, our boy Bishop can't cut a break. When he first showed up, he had retro-'80s El DeBarge ('Member "Rhythm of the Night"?) oily hair. Then, to make him grimier and grittier, they gave him a buzzcut that makes him look like an outpatient recovering from brain surgery. Want our suggestion? Shave it bald, B-Man. Hey, it was a good look for Yul Brenner and Telly Savalas before they died.

MORT OF THE MONTH

Now it's time to look at the lamest character of the month, or, as we like to call 'em, the Mort of the Month!

MATTER MASTER

Nice hat. In an effort to make this Mort as painless as possible, we're just going to blow through his origin and history and try not to stop for any stupid jokes. Ready? Mark Mandrill, a would-be scientist attempting to transform lead into gold, had a vial of chemicals explode in front of him and, startled, yelled, "Get away from me!", which the chemicals did. Realizing that something odd was about, Mandrill fashioned a wand from the chemicals (oboy) and found he could control any "pure" substance (y'know, pure diamond, pure dirt, etc.). Anyhoo, Mandrill donned a suit that, much like Batman's, would instill fear and superstition in any who saw it, and then had his ass kicked by Hawkwoman. And no, he's not dead yet.

BULL PEN

One Year Closer to Armageddon

Having accomplished little in 1996 other than serving some hard jail time and proving that there is such a thing as too much cheese, we present to you the top 10 ways the *Wizard* staffers hope 1997 will be a year of love and peace through some deep, insightful New Year's Resolutions:

"To remove Jenny Jones from the face of the Earth." —Bob Marshall

"To squeeze more things." —Doug Goldstein

"To stop putting *Wizard*'s Mego dolls in...compromising positions. And to give their clothes back." —Andrew Kardon

"To finally meet Mary Chapin Carpenter. Hey, she's on the same planet...so it isn't impossible." —Marc Wilkofsky

"Give 'Babylon 5' a chance, but persist in demeaning it in Doug Goldstein's ['B5"s #1 fan] presence." —Scott Beatty

"To kill all of my roommates. And get away with it." —Brian Cunningham

"Reveal to the world that I indeed am Garth Ennis. And then try and cash some of his checks." —Jim McLauchlin

"To make stupidity a capital offense and get the job as the guy pulling the switch." —Steve Blackwell

"To somehow prove romance isn't dead." —Pat McCallum

"To be nicer to the editor-in-chief and try and get more money out of him." —Arlene So

One of the Damned

Scott Beatty

Copy Editor, *Wizard: The Guide to Comics*

What is it you do at *Wizard*?
As a copy editor, I edit stories for grammar and content. I write occasional features and the monthly toy column. I con...ahem...negotiate with toy companies for free samples. Occasionally, I levitate, speak in tongues and remember the DC Universe before *Crisis on Infinite Earths*. And I say "shmoopy" a lot.

Your favorite section in *Wizard*?
"Toy Chest" or "Trailer Park."

What amazed or surprised you most about the Wizard Press offices?
The time Warehouse Manager Donato looked me in the eyes at lunch and said, "I almost kilt a man wit' a piece o' wood." And people wonder why I eat at my desk.

What excites or interests you the most about comics?
Superheroes. I just love 'em. Since I could read, I've always been into comics. In 1977, I was in the hospital with a bout of pneumonia. I missed seeing "Star Wars" that year—which made me King Loser at school recess later. Comics got me through.

Favorite movie of all time?
"The Omega Man"—Charlton Heston battling zombies!

Favorite TV shows?
My favorite used to be "Profit," which I loved. After that, I'd say, "3rd Rock from the Sun" and "NewsRadio."

People would be surprised to know that you...
...have all 15 issues of DC's *Secret Society of Super-Villains*, and I *like* them. And that I formerly taught English at Iowa State University, before being driven out by angry Freshmen carrying torches. Fire bad!

Favorite comics right now?
Legion of Super-Heroes, Legionnaires, Flash, Astro City, Nightwing, Impulse, Green Lantern, Aztek and my absolute favorite, the new *JLA*—I haven't anticipated a next issue so much since I was a kid.

Favorite comic of all time?
The New Teen Titans (1st) #38: "Who Is Donna Troy?" It's not earth-shaking. It has no climactic battles. It's just Dick Grayson solving the most important case of his life. He's never been portrayed better.

What superpower would you want, and why?
Time travel, so I can return with pristine copies of Golden Age books or Mego superhero figures, and then destroy the collector's market...*and* maybe the time-space continuum.

Illustration by David Prager

WIZARD TOP TEN

Top 10 things that, in hindsight, *Wizard* shouldn't have done in 1996

10. Posing as the president of a multi-billion-dollar company interested in doing comics, calling Jim Shooter, and after saying we want him to run it and him responding, "Really?!?", yelling, "No, not really!" and hanging up the phone.
9. Daring that white chick, Debbie Rowe, to bump uglies with Michael Jackson. Geez, whatever abomination pops outta her is on our heads.
8. Hacking onto the Wall Street computers and messing with Marvel's stock. Nobody can take a joke these days.
7. Telling Pam Anderson, "Yeah, you do 'Barb Wire,' and you've hit the big time, baby!" We, uh, just wanted to see her in tight leather.
6. Telling Pam Anderson, "Yeah, you and Tommy are perfect! You'll be together forever, baby!" We just wanted those pictures from offa the Internet.
5. Telling Pam Anderson, "Yeah, getting breast implants on your back is the way to go, baby!" (Wait...we're getting her with that one *this* year. Forget we said anything.)
4. Intercepting a Fed Ex package with the new Wolverine sketches in it, erasing his nose and then mailing it to Marvel. We really thought they'd catch the mistake. Honest.
3. Paying that Jeffrey Maier kid $25 to catch that ball during Game 1 of this year's American League Championship Series. Geez, we didn't think the Yankees were gonna go and win the whole damn thing.
2. Daring the Freemen to hold out for just two more months. *Just two more months!* Oops.
1. Not hunting down the Spider-Clone ourselves and impaling him on our goblin-glider. (And we woulda made it hurt more.)

CONTEST WINNERS

EISNER, #62: Tracy C. Lesch, Casselberry, Fla.
[TRIVIA ANSWERS: 1) Denny Colt; 2) Wildwood Cemetery; 3) *A Contract with God*]

ONSLAUGHT, #62: Ray Hoey, Staten Island, N.Y.

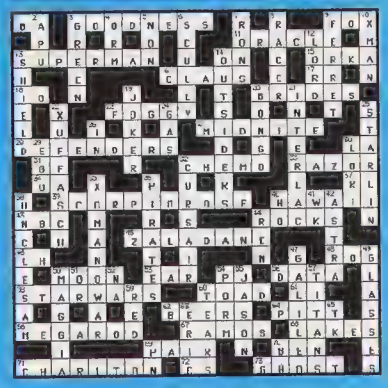
C.B.I.Q. answers...

from page 186

1. A	5. C	10. B	14. C	18. B
2. C	7. A	11. C	15. B	19. A
3. A	8. B	12. A	16. C	20. B
4. B	9. C	13. A	17. C	

CROSSWORD answers...

from page 187



PAUL CHADWICK

GUEST COLUMN

LOYALTY TO PUBLISHERS—DOES IT STILL EXIST?

Creative businesses like comics depend on personal relationships. No matter how ironclad a contract, it can't cover the essential intangibles: good will and a sense of being appreciated. We're not delivering pig iron or circuit chips; creators suffer the agonies of trying to produce work they're proud of (primarily), is commercial (*second*arily) and is on time (*seventeenth*arily).

Publishers share the same desires, though not in the same order! How creator and publisher manage the ensuing dance determines how much loyalty they feel toward each other. But it is easier to dance with someone your own size than with a large corporation, which can be like a giant robot with missile launchers in its kneecaps. When dancing, you know *it's* definitely leading.

My perspective is unusual. After a couple of early assignments at Pacific and Marvel, I started publishing *Concrete* 11 years ago with Dark Horse Comics. With interruptions for occasional non-*Concrete* projects, I've remained there—and with my agent, Mike Friedrich of Star*Reach—ever since. I like long-term relationships. You go through ups and downs, but in the shared years there is a build-up of mutual gratitude which carries you past the inevitable screw-ups of producing work for publication.

But gratitude is felt by people, not corporations, which are designed to be responsible only to shareholders. Recent mass layoffs at Marvel, and its much publicized outsourcing, is a classic take-no-prisoners corporate maneuver. If they could sell comics penciled and inked in Indonesian sweatshops, surely they would. Luckily, comics still call for American talent and sensibilities. But these days, no corporate employee can feel assured his efforts will be appreciated past the next payment period.

Still, loyal relationships occasionally flower in a corporate context. Dan Jurgens (*Superman, Teen Titans*) has built a top-flight career almost entirely nurtured and mentored by former DC Vice President Dick Giordano. Dan started as an assistant to Dick, and benefited from Dick's backing of Dan's *Booster Gold* in 1986 and other work since. Dan's such a good artist, he'll do fine even after Giordano's inevitable retirement from comics. It's different for writers strongly associated with popular character, as was the experience of Chris Claremont, coolly dumped after spending the better part of 20 years building the X-Men into the powerhouse of the industry.

Not that artists cannot be less than righteous in their dealings. The advances Kevin Eastman, who was feeling generous after his *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* hit the big time, laid out for work never delivered are legendary (the discontinued comic *Big Numbers* certainly lived up to its name). It was hard to watch what seemed sometimes like a stampede for easy money in the early Tundra days.

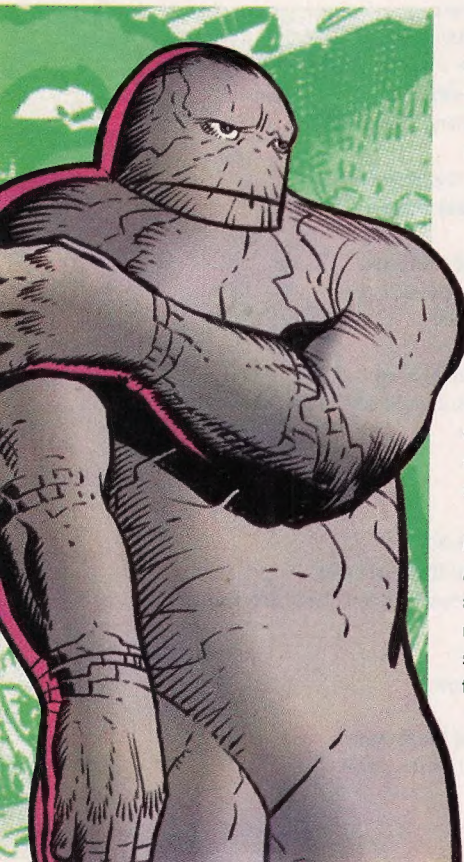
I recall one early Dark Horse creator who made quite a pile of cash with much assistance writing and drawing by other hands provided by Dark Horse. Despite his good fortune, he'd read Dave Sim's latest publishers-are-scum tract in Sim's *Cerebus* and had come to work loaded for bear, seething over his exploitation. He turned to self-publishing, and his sales and profile sunk into obscurity—this after nixing the animation deal Dark Horse had snared. He shot himself in the foot with a cannon.

Not that leaving to self-publish is always a bad move! The original Image partners left Marvel *en masse*, loaded with hot-artist status and royalties to use as start-up capital. Then they beat Marvel at its own game, with house-styles and aggressive licensing. Now, some of them are dancing with Marvel again—only this time, *they're* leading.

Of course, Image has endured some fractures of its own lately, to the satisfaction of those who have long predicted just that. But more amazing is how long they've remained intact! Buckets of cash provide more to fight over, and tend to enlarge egos, but only now has there been a serious split. As a part of the Legend group, a mix of passive and prickly guys who'd starve trying to put together an order at a Chinese restaurant, I take my hat off to them.

If comics continue to grow and become increasingly corporate, and it seems it will, we can expect personal loyalty—like the kind I share with Dark Horse Publisher Mike Richardson—to be more fragile. I dread the day he sells Dark Horse, should it ever come. But loyalty will never disappear—the personal, even emotional nature of the creator-publisher relationship will assure that.

Paul Chadwick is a member of the Legend imprint and created Concrete, *published by Dark Horse Comics. His last project was 1996's* Concrete: Think Like A Mountain.



At left: Chadwick's *Concrete* has called Dark Horse Comics its only home

WIZARD profile

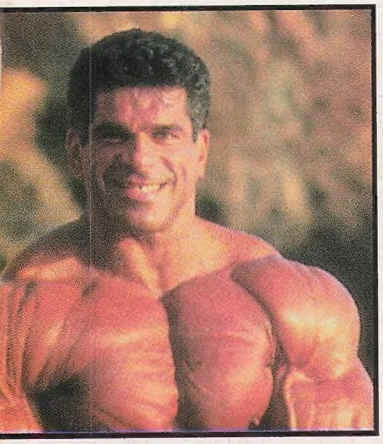
Here's looking at...

LOU FERRIGNO

Lou Ferrigno has always been larger than life. On screen and off. "I've always felt like a superstar in person as well as on the screen," says the 45-year-old actor/strongman. "I'm showing strength and power, and I'm a good role model. I've always identified with characters like the Incredible Hulk and Samson because, for me, there was a lot in those characters that got me through my real life."

Ferrigno, forever immortalized as the mean, green fighting machine in the late '70s/early '80s "Incredible Hulk" TV series and currently serving as cover boy for Samson Comics' *Samson '97*, recalls a childhood made all the more painful by the fact that he was rendered 85-percent deaf at an early age. He was called "deaf Louie" and "tin ear," and shown little love and encouragement by his father. "I escaped by fantasizing I was a superhero like the Incredible Hulk, who didn't want to hurt anybody and just wanted to be left alone to live his own life. I identified with the Hulk's anger and reveled in his power and strength."

Ferrigno turned to bodybuilding and captured the prestigious Mr. America and Mr. International titles before taking on acting and movie roles such as "Hercules" and "Samson." Then "The Incredible Hulk" literally fell into his lap when the director's son mentioned that actor Richard Kiel, who was already cast, didn't really look like the Hulk. "They stopped production, did a nationwide search and liked the fact that I could show emotion without speaking," says Ferrigno.



The success of "The Incredible Hulk" spun the actor into a variety of acting challenges. He appeared as a regular in the TV series "Trauma Center" and continued to flex his acting muscles in the movie "The Cage" and a trio of "Hulk" reunion movies. Currently, the Los Angeles resident is branching out as the voice of the Hulk on the UPN animated series and as the cover model for Samson Comics. "I've done a lot of work on my speech over the years, so it was a natural thing for me to try for the voice of the Hulk. It surprised the producers when I was so good at it. I choose my projects very carefully, and doing the covers for Samson Comics was something I really wanted to do for myself and my fans. The Samson icon is one of physical prowess, strength and intelligence."

Ferrigno, who just completed "Stand Tall," a documentary on his life due to hit your TV in March, and is currently at work on the motion picture "Viking Twilight," recently came out of retirement to once again compete successfully in the bodybuilding arena. His reasoning was simple. "I wanted to prove that age was not a factor and that I could prove to myself and others that I could still be a champion."

by Marc Shapiro

First comic read...
Some Superman issue. I loved how he was admired and idolized by the world. Superman was an escape for me, and the books brought me happiness.

Favorite comic of all time...
The Incredible Hulk. I was the Hulk my whole life.

Favorite work of your own...
My new documentary, "Stand Tall."

Comics you read...
Fantastic Four and *The Incredible Hulk*

The one person you'd like to meet...
Sean Connery

Superpower you would most want...
The ability to read people's minds.

Favorite munchie at 2 a.m....
Cheese and crackers

Favorite toy as a kid and as an adult...
As a kid, my old-fashioned steel train set. I don't have any favorite toys now.

Things you collect...
Antique guns

Favorite cartoon...
"The Incredible Hulk"

People you would most like to work with...
Directors Steven Spielberg and Martin Scorsese

Favorite TV show...
A&E's "Biography"

Last good movie you saw...
"Sleepers"

If you had the power of The Beyonder...
I'd destroy all evil on this planet.

Batteries never included.

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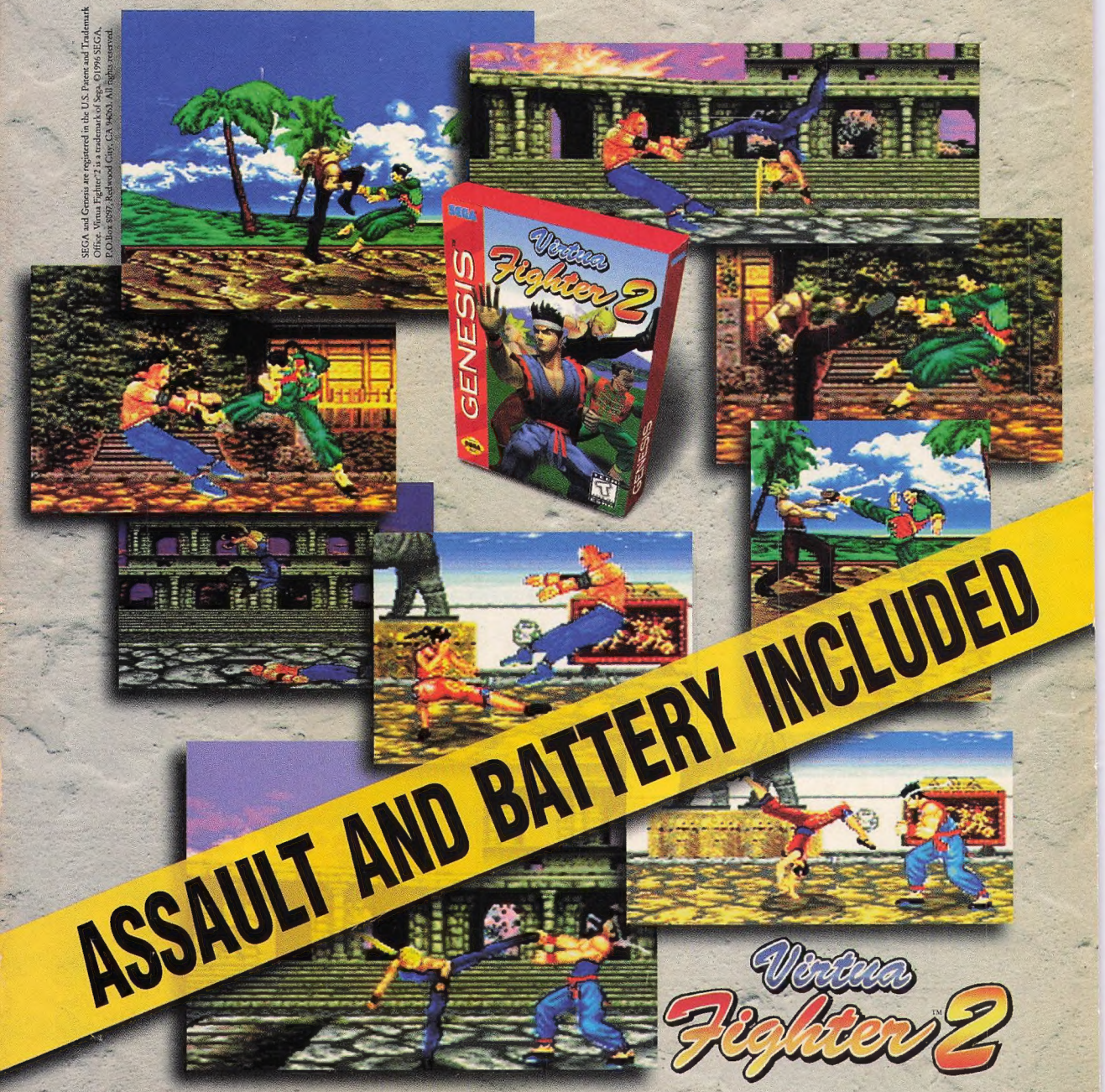

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